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Saturday January 20 1996

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Bahamas S 2.00	Malta M 0.43	Switzerland SF 3
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The Guardian

INTERNATIONAL

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

48,454

Robert Maxwell: Was he murdered?

A major new serialisation starting today

MPs question role of Serious Fraud Office after verdicts in 131-day trial that cost public £25m

Maxwells cleared of fraud



Kevin, left, and Ian Maxwell leaving court after being cleared of fraud charges by an Old Bailey jury yesterday at the end of an eight-month trial

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

Tears of relief but pensioners 'torment' goes on

Dan Atkinson

THE future of the Serious Fraud Office was last night being called into question after the dramatic acquittal at the Old Bailey of the Maxwell brothers, at the end of a 131-day trial which cost the public more than £25 million.

Kevin and Ian Maxwell, sons of the publishing tycoon Robert Maxwell, were cleared in unanimous verdicts after 11 days' deliberation by the jury of conspiring to defraud pension funds. Financial adviser Larry Trachtenberg was also acquitted. Despite the acquittals, eight further charges remain under consideration.

The Serious Fraud Office, which is responsible for investigating and prosecuting financial fraud, masterminded

the £11 million investigation into the Maxwells' affairs. It is now the target of heavy criticism for what was seen as a four-year fiasco resulting in charges which could not be made to stand up in court.

MPs last night tabled Commons questions about the SFO's role following a string of high-profile failures to secure convictions. Questions were also being asked about jury trials serious fraud cases.

After the jury announced their verdict, to gasps in the courtroom, Kevin Maxwell rushed across and shook hands with all 12 members. His brother sobbed with relief.

In emotional scenes outside the court, the Maxwell brothers hugged each other and expressed their delight and relief at the verdicts. Ian Maxwell said: "I have much in my heart that I will keep

Serious Fraud Office

The main Serious Fraud Office failures:

- 1994: Acquittal of George Walker, former head of the Brent Walker group of £164m fraud charges.
- 1992: Charges against Polly Pack boss Asif Nadeem for alleged £200m fraud left on file after he fled country.
- 1993: Outrage when Roger Levitt sentenced to 180 hours community service for £58m misdeed.
- 1992: Guinness II. Cases against Lord Spens and Roger Seelig involving £10.5 million fraud charges collapse.
- 1992: County NatWest: £140m insider dealing convictions overturned on appeal.

for myself and my family. I would like also to pay tribute to that family and to my lawyers who have been a constant source of strength and pride to me, as has my brother."

Kevin Maxwell said: "I gave evidence in this trial over a period of 21 days and, in his summing-up, the judge said he thought no jury had had a better opportunity of assessing the honesty of the witness than in my case."

On other pages

THE acquittal of Kevin and Ian Maxwell is a seminal moment for the conduct of serious fraud investigations and trials in Britain. It was as much the Serious Fraud Office and the jury system which was on trial as the Maxwell brothers and their co-defendant Larry Trachtenberg.

Alex Brummer, page 22

□ The Maxwell verdicts, pages 4 and 5

□ Leader comment, page 16

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2.15pm, Liberal Democrat MP Alex Carlile demanded a statement from Attorney-General Sir Nicholas Lyall to explain how the disastrous decision to prosecute [the Maxwells] at enormous public expense was taken, and to take responsibility for that disastrous decision.

He added: "This long experiment with the SFO has proved to be costly and there is clear evidence that there has been no improvement in the prosecutorial decision-making process as a result."

"The time has now come for financial irregularities to be subject to much more rigorous regulation. Prosecution is a very blunt instrument in such cases."

Labour's City spokesman Allister Darling said: "In view of the failure of this trial and others in the past, we now need urgently to review the way City crimes are prosecuted and in particular the role of the SFO."

Paul Boateng, Labour's spokesman on legal affairs, said: "This is a grave and potentially fatal setback for the Serious Fraud Office that calls into question the future of that institution."

"There must now be a serious question mark as to whether a fundamental overhaul should now take place of the SFO."

Turn to page 3, column 1

British criminal court resulted in a not-guilty verdict.

The case leaves 32,000 pensioners asking who was responsible for the loss of £440 million from their pension funds and where the unrecovered cash went. "We have a right to know who inflicted mental torment on thousands of pensioners for the past four years," a spokesman for the pensioners said.

Minutes after the verdict, at

One more bad day for the Crown in Court 22

Dan Atkinson and Vivek Chaudhary

AT THE end, the fact that the jury returned at all was almost as surprising as the verdicts it was to deliver. So long had the seven men and five women spent on their deliberations, 48 hours 17 minutes stretched across 11 nights in secret hotels, that their arrival seemed an unwarranted disruption of the smooth running of Old Bailey Court 22.

As the verdicts were announced, the victor of the hour, Kevin Maxwell's QC Alan Jones, was on his feet. The man who had made the Crown's life a misery for eight months delivered the coup de grace: Kevin, he declared, should not face trial again. His honesty had been proved under the fire of 21 days in the witness box. The remaining charges against him should be dropped.

The Crown QC, Alan Suckling, asked for a week to think about it.

With a sense of anticlimax, the judge departed, the court rose and Kevin shook hands with each of the jurors. His brother Ian appeared to be in tears, while the stocky former university lecturer Larry

Trachtenberg executed a clumsy but heartfelt bear hug upon his own QC, Michael Hill.

Ian's wife Laura ran into court and threw her arms around her husband. It was a far cry from the chaos outside, where dozens of photographers had been corralled behind metal barriers on the far side of Chancery Lane. When the court reporters flooded out into the road, civil war loomed, with the photographers demanding that the cops remove this obstruction to their line of fire.

Outside, the brothers hugged one another. Giving the thumbs-up sign, and looking slightly dazed, Kevin read out a brief statement, which was followed by an off-the-cuff speech from Ian. Seconds later the police led them into a nearby office where they remained for 45 minutes. Four bottles of wine were taken in.

"We are just very relieved and can't say how we plan to celebrate," said Ian as he emerged with Laura. The couple and Kevin posed briefly for pictures before they made their way to a waiting Range Rover.

Mr Trachtenberg strolled out of court to a waiting car. He said he had telephoned his family in America and would be meeting his parents, who had flown to Britain, in the evening.

Smiling and looking relieved, he said: "I'm going to celebrate with a large whisky. Even in my darkest moments I never doubted British justice. I'm being congratulated for being acquitted but you really need to congratulate British justice."

If Mr Trachtenberg's exit was relatively low-key, that of Mr Suckling was practically invisible. The defeated prosecutor wandered out in a business suit and made his way down Chancery Lane, as oblivious to the media scrum as it was to him.

Trollope concedes Cotswolds 'Moss Side' is a most pleasant and law-abiding place

John Ezzard

IF MAY only have 200 inhabitants — but Aston Magna, the village which novelist Joanna Trollope compared to the worst of Moss Side, won the moral right yesterday to call itself Aston Magna when Ms Trollope issued a full retraction.

She confirmed that, as the Gloucestershire villagers

have always maintained, Aston Magna is "a most pleasant and law-abiding place in which to live and work".

She joined with the Gloucestershire Community Foundation in apologising for "any embarrassment and annoyance" caused by remarks made during an appeal as trust patron at a private meeting.

Ms Trollope had told the meeting the village was "a

grim straggle of scattered houses, many of them boarded up, with a population significantly immigrant... "It's a place where all the goings-on you are accustomed to associate with a place like Moss Side are commonplace villages."

Ms Trollope had added: "The only difference between urban misery and rural misery is that country people are

reticent and tradition more ingrained and inclined to suffer in silence."

Aston Magna did not suffer this in silence.

The villagers protested that the boarded up houses were due to be replaced with new homes in March and that the "immigrants" were Poles fully integrated into the area after the second world war.

In a letter to the Guardian Ms Trollope explained that

her remarks were in the context of "a strong plea for the Havas of Gloucestershire (of whom there are many) to help the Have Nots (of whom there are considerably more)".

The retraction, which follows further village protests, came in letter sent on behalf of the trustees and Ms Trollope to Blockley parish council, which covers Aston Magna. It admitted the remarks were "misconceived".

But it asked those hurt to be "charitable enough to acknowledge that there are those in Gloucestershire — albeit few in number — for whom such words were only too painfully true".

Last night Margaret Nobes, parish councillor for the village, said: "This did cause a lot of hurt but the general feeling is that the apology is accepted and the matter is closed."

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the Observer

The Beat Generation Vs Generation X

My Generation

Radical readers in 1966 and 1996 compared in My Generation, a special life supplement free this Sunday with the Observer.

Howard backed on deportation

Vivek Chaudhary

POLITICAL asylum-seekers should only be entitled to have one claim considered by immigration authorities before being deported from Britain, a High Court judge ruled yesterday.

The ruling is likely to have wide implications for asylum-seekers. Mr Justice Latham ruled that the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, did not act unlawfully when he rejected a fresh asylum appeal by Ade Onibiyi, aged 20, a Nigerian student who is threatened with deportation.

Nicolas Blake QC, for Mr Onibiyi, claimed that Mr Howard unlawfully tried to remove his client by not taking into account fresh evidence about oppression in Nigeria and the fate of Mr Onibiyi's father, Abdul, who was deported to Nigeria last October and has not been heard of since.

Mr Onibiyi junior, who is being held at the Campfield detention centre, Oxfordshire, had been refused political asylum when he resappled

last December, presenting the unknown fate of his father and the execution of the writer, Ken Saro-Wiwa, and eight other activists as fresh evidence for his appeal.

Both the Onibiyis are opposed to the Nigerian military regime and Mr Onibiyi senior was a member of the Nigerian Democratic Movement in London. Since his deportation he has not been heard of and his family fear that he is being held by Nigerian authorities.

The judge, dismissing an application for a judicial review, ruled that Mr Howard had been entitled to conclude that Ade Onibiyi's new application did not constitute a fresh claim and did not disclose any material that justified him reversing an earlier decision to reject his appeal for political asylum.

Lawyers representing Mr Onibiyi were however, given leave to appeal. The judge said that the case and his ruling raised important issues and "it seems to me to be time it was grappled with in the Court of Appeal".

Immigration lawyers criticised the ruling because it

further restricted the rights of asylum-seekers. David Burgess, a solicitor, said: "It's very depressing and does not make sense. You get some political situations that are very volatile and always changing and should be grounds for a fresh claim."

"The ruling is unfortunate and couldn't come at a worse time for asylum-seekers given the legislative changes that are in prospect."

A spokeswoman for the Onibiyi family campaign said: "We are preparing an appeal immediately and are obviously quite disappointed with the decision. We are hopeful however, because we have been given leave to appeal. We are still very worried about Ade's father and the fact that the Home Secretary did not take this into account is a setback."

She added that Unison, which has been backing the campaign, attempted to trace Mr Onibiyi senior through contacts in the International Labour Organisation. "We think Abdul is being held and that the life of his family would be in danger if they returned to Nigeria."

Worry at rail safety cuts

Rebecca Smithers and John Mullin

ABOUT yesterday expressed "serious concern" about the imminent departure of half the most senior and experienced members of Railtrack's safety staff ahead of its £2 billion flotation in May.

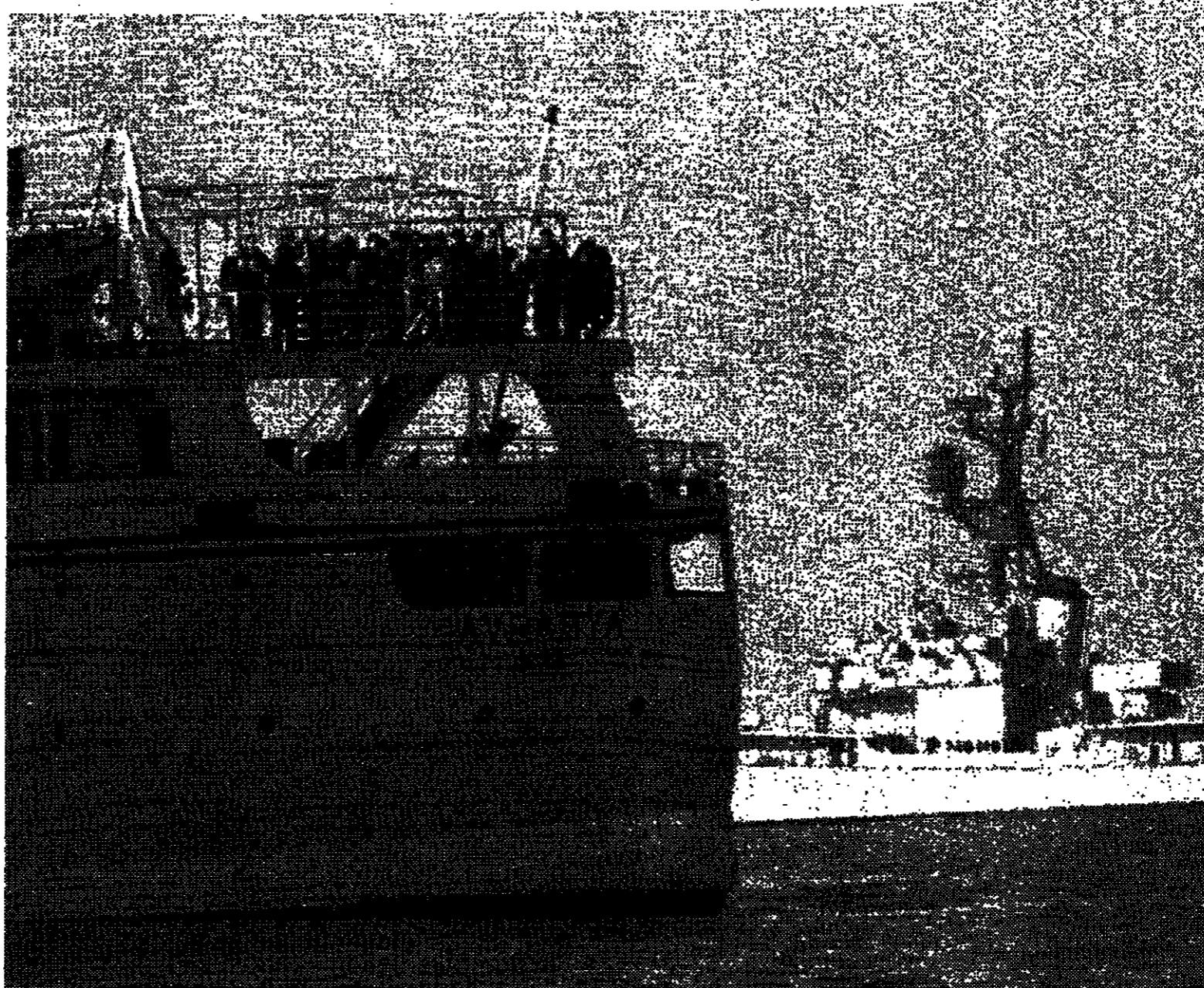
There are suggestions of quiet within Railtrack's senior management as the organisation works to a much tighter deadline for its sell-off

than had been planned. One executive, Peter Monaghan, missing for 10 days, was discovered yesterday in a north London hotel suffering from stress. He was undergoing treatment at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital for a suspected nervous breakdown.

Among those to depart are John Mitchell, controller of safety standards. He took the job only six months ago, but is to retire. Another three of the eight most senior staff heading the 120-strong safety

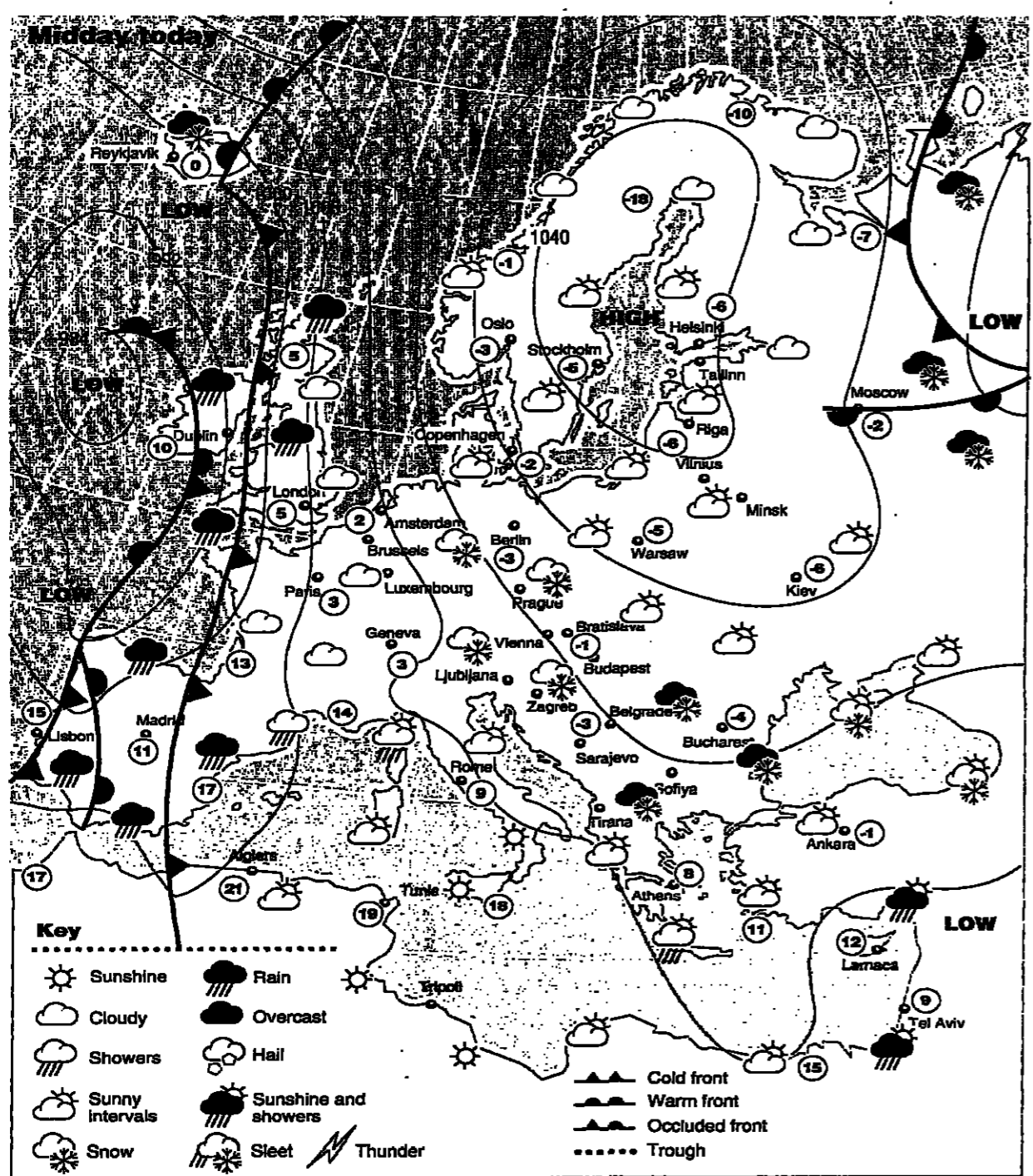
directorates, are also quitting. David Maidment, controller of safety policy, is to retire shortly, and two other senior staff members are also leaving. Several more junior staff will also leave as Railtrack completes two safety projects related to privatisation.

Railtrack denied there was anything suspicious in the departures, nor did they compromise safety standards. With the safety projects completed, the inspectorate's workload was reduced.



The frightening hijacking of a Black Sea ferry ended here last night in an almost festive atmosphere, with the pro-Chechen gunmen throwing down their weapons and surrendering. John Hooper writes. As a rubber launch sped the group to shore through the dusk near Iriva, a fishing village at the mouth of the Bosphorus, local supporters of the Chechen cause chanted slogans, lit torches and danced round a bonfire on a headland less than half a mile from the ship. The negotiation to end the hijacking of the Avrasya was carried out by a three-strong team, shutting a dinghy between a naval patrol boat and the hijack group. Turks opposed to Russia's bombardment this week of Chechens holding another group of hostages in the Dagستان village of Pervomayskaya. Just before leaving the ship, one of the gunmen, speaking by cellular telephone, said: "We hit our targets." According to the captain, he had turned the ship into a floating bomb by strapping explosives to the fuel tanks and other parts of the ship. During the hijacking they had threatened to blow up the vessel in the Bosphorus. Already questions were being asked, not least in Moscow, about the deal the Turkish authorities had struck to end the affair so abruptly after three days of uncertainty. According to one report, the hijackers were promised prison sentences of only eight months if they surrendered. The Avrasya sailed yesterday encased by Turkish naval and coastguard ships. Shortly before 5pm black smoke issued from the ferry's funnel and it made a wide, slow turn in front of the headland to cheers and chants from the onlookers.

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

City	Temp	Wind	Weather
Algeria	21-13	Sh	Sunny
Amsterdam	2-5	F	Cloudy
Athens	8-2	F	Overcast
Berlin	3-6	M	Overcast
Bombay	2-6	F	Cloudy
Brussels	2-6	F	Cloudy
Copenhagen	-1-4	C	Overcast
Dublin	1-1	C	Overcast
Geneva	1-1	C	Overcast
Lisbon	12-4	F	Overcast
London	2-6	F	Cloudy
Madrid	11-4	F	Overcast
Milan	2-6	F	Cloudy
Nice	12-1	F	Overcast
Oslo	-3-7	F	Overcast
Paris	4-12	F	Overcast
Rome	9-3	F	Overcast
Stockholm	1-10	S	Overcast
Toronto	-1-7	S	Overcast
Vienna	-1-7	S	Overcast

Around the world

City	Temp	Wind	Weather
Adelaide	19-12	Sh	Sunny
Amsterdam	-1-4	M	Overcast
Athens	8-2	F	Overcast
Berlin	3-6	M	Overcast
Bombay	2-6	F	Cloudy
Brussels	2-6	F	Cloudy
Copenhagen	-1-4	C	Overcast
Dublin	1-1	C	Overcast
Geneva	1-1	C	Overcast
Lisbon	12-4	F	Overcast
London	2-6	F	Cloudy
Madrid	11-4	F	Overcast
Milan	2-6	F	Cloudy
Nice	12-1	F	Overcast
Oslo	-3-7	F	Overcast
Paris	4-12	F	Overcast
Rome	9-3	F	Overcast
Stockholm	1-10	S	Overcast
Toronto	-1-7	S	Overcast
Vienna	-1-7	S	Overcast

European weather outlook

Only very slow changes in the weather over the next few days. It is going to stay cold with a lot of dry weather, but the occasional light snow flurry is possible, especially in the east. Max temp ranging from 10C on the west coast of Norway to -18C in the interior.

Low Countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland

A very cold day with a brisk easterly wind adding to the chill. Most places will be cloudy with scattered light snow flurries, although eastern Austria may have some heavier snow late in the day. Max temp -4 to +2C.

France

Atlantic fronts will be close enough to western France to threaten rain, and that means the Riviera is likely to have a scattering of showers. Elsewhere should be a largely dry day with a good deal of mist and low cloud. Max temp ranging from 13C in the south-west to near 0C in the extreme east.

Spain and Portugal

Another very unsettled day with lots of heavy showers and some more general spells of rain. Max temp 11-17C.

Italy

The odd light snow flurry is possible in the far north, but much of Italy will have a dry and bright day with the best of the sunny spells in the south. Max temp ranging from 20C around Milan to 14C in the extreme south.

Greece

Cold again today with sunny spells and a few scattered showers which will fall as light snow in the northern hills. Max temp mainly around 3C but lower in the far north and a bit higher on the islands.

Television and radio — Saturday

BBC 1
8.25am News, 8.30am Super, 8.35am The Arthur Burns, 8.40am Top Gear, 8.45am The New Adventures of Superman, 10.15am Live and Kicking, 10.30am The Big Breakfast, 10.35am The Big Breakfast, 10.40am The Big Breakfast, 10.45am The Big Breakfast, 10.50am The Big Breakfast, 10.55am The Big Breakfast, 11.00am The Big Breakfast, 11.05am The Big Breakfast, 11.10am The Big Breakfast, 11.15am The Big Breakfast, 11.20am The Big Breakfast, 11.25am The Big Breakfast, 11.30am The Big Breakfast, 11.35am The Big Breakfast, 11.40am The Big Breakfast, 11.45am The Big Breakfast, 11.50am The Big Breakfast, 11.55am The Big Breakfast, 12.00am The Big Breakfast.

BBC 2
8.00am Open University, 8.15am The Big Breakfast, 8.30am The Big Breakfast, 8.45am The Big Breakfast, 9.00am The Big Breakfast, 9.15am The Big Breakfast, 9.30am The Big Breakfast, 9.45am The Big Breakfast, 10.00am The Big Breakfast, 10.15am The Big Breakfast, 10.30am The Big Breakfast, 10.45am The Big Breakfast, 11.00am The Big Breakfast, 11.15am The Big Breakfast, 11.30am The Big Breakfast, 11.45am The Big Breakfast, 12.00am The Big Breakfast.

BBC Prime
8.00am BBC World News, 8.30am The Big Breakfast, 8.45am The Big Breakfast, 9.00am The Big Breakfast, 9.15am The Big Breakfast, 9.30am The Big Breakfast, 9.45am The Big Breakfast, 10.00am The Big Breakfast, 10.15am The Big Breakfast, 10.30am The Big Breakfast, 10.45am The Big Breakfast, 11.00am The Big Breakfast, 11.15am The Big Breakfast, 11.30am The Big Breakfast, 11.45am The Big Breakfast, 12.00am The Big Breakfast.

BBC World
8.00am BBC World News, 8.30am The Big Breakfast, 8.45am The Big Breakfast, 9.00am The Big Breakfast, 9.15am The Big Breakfast, 9.30am The Big Breakfast, 9.45am The Big Breakfast, 10.00am The Big Breakfast, 10.15am The Big Breakfast, 10.30am The Big Breakfast, 10.45am The Big Breakfast, 11.00am The Big Breakfast, 11.15am The Big Breakfast, 11.30am The Big Breakfast, 11.45am The Big Breakfast, 12.00am The Big Breakfast.

Television and radio — Sunday

BBC 1
7.50am PM: Abbot and Costello Meet The Killer, 8.00am The Big Breakfast, 8.15am The Big Breakfast, 8.30am The Big Breakfast, 8.45am The Big Breakfast, 9.00am The Big Breakfast, 9.15am The Big Breakfast, 9.30am The Big Breakfast, 9.45am The Big Breakfast, 10.00am The Big Breakfast, 10.15am The Big Breakfast, 10.30am The Big Breakfast, 10.45am The Big Breakfast, 11.00am The Big Breakfast, 11.15am The Big Breakfast, 11.30am The Big Breakfast, 11.45am The Big Breakfast, 12.00am The Big Breakfast.

BBC 2
8.00am BBC World News, 8.30am The Big Breakfast, 8.45am The Big Breakfast, 9.00am The Big Breakfast, 9.15am The Big Breakfast, 9.30am The Big Breakfast, 9.45am The Big Breakfast, 10.00am The Big Breakfast, 10.15am The Big Breakfast, 10.30am The Big Breakfast, 10.45am The Big Breakfast, 11.00am The Big Breakfast, 11.15am The Big Breakfast, 11.30am The Big Breakfast, 11.45am The Big Breakfast, 12.00am The Big Breakfast.

BBC Prime
8.00am BBC World News, 8.30am The Big Breakfast, 8.45am The Big Breakfast, 9.00am The Big Breakfast, 9.15am The Big Breakfast, 9.30am The Big Breakfast, 9.45am The Big Breakfast, 10.00am The Big Breakfast, 10.15am The Big Breakfast, 10.30am The Big Breakfast, 10.45am The Big Breakfast, 11.00am The Big Breakfast, 11.15am The Big Breakfast, 11.30am The Big Breakfast, 11.45am The Big Breakfast, 12.00am The Big Breakfast.

BBC World
8.00am BBC World News, 8.30am The Big Breakfast, 8.45am The Big Breakfast, 9.00am The Big Breakfast, 9.15am The Big Breakfast, 9.30am The Big Breakfast, 9.45am The Big Breakfast, 10.00am The Big Breakfast, 10.15am The Big Breakfast, 10.30am The Big Breakfast, 10.45am The Big Breakfast, 11.00am The Big Breakfast, 11.15am The Big Breakfast, 11.30am The Big Breakfast, 11.45am The Big Breakfast, 12.00am The Big Breakfast.

سورة الاحقاف



Who's paying? The Duchess out shopping and, below, Texan Steve Wyatt, left, and financial consultant John Bryan



Fergie settles for first class as the price of fame

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

LIKE her sister-in-law before her, the Duchess of York sought refuge from scandal in the American capital yesterday — but triggered further rumours about both her financial woes and her romantic life.

Taking a leaf from the Princess Diana Book of Crisis Management, Fergie holed up in a swank Washington hotel, seeking to dodge the press swarm she brought with her from London. She was all but a prisoner of the Royal Suite in the Four Seasons Hotel, Georgetown's smartest lodgings, as speculation reached fever pitch over how much money she was spending and with whom.

The Duchess had caught royal watchers by surprise on Thursday when she al-

tered her travel plans, cancelled a Concorde trip to New York and flew to Washington.

Initial suggestions that she was seeking to save money — amid revelations that she is £3 million in debt — were scotched by her arrival at Heathrow in a chauffeur-driven limousine and her decision to take four first class seats to Washington, for her nanny, her two daughters and herself, at a cost of £9,750.

Yesterday's itinerary provoked further intrigue. Her first official engagement was supposed to be tonight's \$500-a-plate dinner in Connecticut, a fundraiser for Chances for Children, her United States-based charity.

Instead, Fergie met col-

leagues from the Millennium Society, whose rather vague brief stretches to raising money for "international scholarships", and which counts the former Sarah Ferguson among its board of advisers. Apparently shy of the press hounds in the lobby below, the Duchess held the closed-door session in her room at the Four Seasons. The meeting had pointedly not been mentioned by her London office in advance of the US trip, which said that all engagements except the Chances for Children events were "private".

The meeting aroused particular attention because the Millennium Society's co-chairman is Cate Magennis Wyatt. The glamorous Virginia socialite has been married since 1993 to the Texan millionaire Steve

Wyatt — once romantically linked to the Duchess.

Mr Wyatt is best known for the batch of photographs showing him and Fergie at embarrassingly close quarters — including some of the pair frolicking in the south of France with Princess Beatrice. The discovery of the pictures in Mr Wyatt's London flat was widely credited with pushing the Yorks toward separation in 1992.

The Millennium Society refused to comment yesterday on whether the Texan and his former British darling were due to meet again.

Speculation abounded that the two had hoped to see each other at the Wyatts' lush Virginia home, but that the intense media presence had scuppered that plan.

The Duchess's greatest embarrassment has come from her financial troubles, with reporters inquiring, "Who's paying the bill?" at every turn. The cost of her suite at the Four Seasons is \$1,600 (£1,100) a night. Frequent guests include Jordan's King Hussein and actors Tom Hanks and Demi Moore.

Hotel staff refused to say who was paying, but Cate Wyatt told the Washington Post it would not be the Millennium Society. The total cost of the trip, including internal flights to New York, dining and accommodation, is estimated at £20,000.

Words of support came yesterday from another former friend, the Texan financial consultant, John Bryan — the man caught in

the infamous toe-sucking episode. Describing the Duchess's fiscal worries as "much ado about nothing", Mr Bryan told Sky News she enjoyed a good relationship with her bank. "I don't think she needs any bail-out," he said.

The Duchess, Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie are due to return to London in the middle of next week.



Welcome to the USA... the Duchess of York gets a warm greeting at Dulles airport yesterday PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT APPLWHITE

Censorship row over cod fax inquiry

David Hencke Westminster Correspondent

LIBERAL Democrat and Labour MPs yesterday threatened to join forces and push through publication of new allegations that MPs accepted cash for political favours.

The threat follows a decision by the Attorney-General to delete allegations by the owner of Harrods, Mohamed al-Fayed, from a draft House of Commons committee report. Unless Sir Nicholas Lyell changes his mind when the Commons Privileges Committee meets on Monday, the Liberal Democrat and Labour MPs are likely to issue a minority report containing all the allegations.

Monday's meeting is due to consider the draft report on the committee's inquiry into the use of a Commons letterhead by the Guardian as part of its investigation into a weekend stay at the Ritz Hotel, Paris, by the former Cabinet minister, Jonathan Aitken — the so-called "cod fax affair".

At least four Labour MPs are likely to join Liberal Democrat MP David Alton in demanding that Monday's meeting that the allegations Mr al-Fayed submitted to the committee during its inquiry are properly investigated. Sir Nicholas has ruled that the claims raise issues outside the committee's strict remit to investigate the fax.

The row centres on the committee's year-long inquiry into events surrounding the weekend at the Ritz, where Mr Aitken stayed at the same time as three Arab businessmen.

The Guardian was reported to the Privileges Committee, of which Sir Nicholas is a member, after former editor Peter Preston sent the "cod fax", purporting to come from Mr Aitken's office in the Commons. The fax was used to secure a copy of Mr Aitken's bill, which the newspaper required to confirm that part of the invoice had been paid by a business associate.

When confronted with the evidence, Mr Aitken who was minister for defence procurement at the time, said that part of the bill had been inadvertently paid by a Saudi businessman. Said Moham-

med Ayyas, and the balance paid by Mr Aitken's wife.

His version was contested by Mr al-Fayed in evidence to the committee in November.

The MPs are demanding that the "full, unexpurgated version" of the committee's report is sent to the new Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, Sir Gordon Downey, for a fresh inquiry, with a guarantee that all the participants in the affair are called, including Mr Aitken and other ministers and ex-ministers accused by Mr al-Fayed. Failure to agree a fresh inquiry into Mr al-Fayed's allegations looks certain to provoke Mr Alton, said to be furious at the proposed censorship, to publish a minority report, alleging a failure by Parliament's most powerful committee to investigate the affair properly.

In addition, Sir Andrew Bowden, Conservative MP for Brighton, Kempton, has asked to give evidence to the committee to clear his name, after allegations from Mr al-Fayed that he had received an undeclared £5,000 payment for help in fighting the Fayed brothers' battle with Lorrho.

Sir Andrew has told the Guardian he did not receive any money but £5,000 was passed from Mr al-Fayed to a constituent, a former director of Lorrho, who offered to help Mr al-Fayed in his battle over the ownership of Harrods.

The row over the evidence given by Mr al-Fayed exploded last Monday when Sir Nicholas tabled a "filleted version" of the committee's report for publication, which removed 90 per cent of his quotes — leaving the Harrods chief commenting only on the use of the "cod fax". The claims removed from the report included Mr al-Fayed's naming of Mr Ayyas — widely reported in the press — and the name of the woman Mr al-Fayed, who owns the Paris Ritz, claims paid the rest of Mr Aitken's bill.

Also removed is any reference to the role of Sir Andrew Bowden and new allegations about payments made to former corporate affairs minister Neil Hamilton, who has denied receiving any money. His legal action against the Guardian has been stopped by a judge because the action conflicts with rules over parliamentary privilege.

Commons bar the star of TV soap opera

Andrew Cuff Media Correspondent

IT IS being billed as Julie Goodyear meets Douglas Hurd, or the Rover's Return meets Panorama. Channel 4 is launching Britain's first political soap, promising an unflattering portrait of the passions, scandals and sleaze of Westminster.

MPs Edwinna Currie and Ken Livingstone are to have walk-on roles in Annie's Bar — a series produced by production company — as the soap blends topical insights with fictional hokum.

Channel 4 is deliberately courting controversy with the project. Peter Ansong, commissioning editor of drama, said the everyday story of parliamentary folk would "read on politicians' toes".

Director Baz Taylor said: "We would like to be as entertaining and scurrilous as we can be. MPs are there to be shot at — they are fair game."

But with a General Election possibly only months away, the production team are aware of political sensitivity.

Writer Andy Armitage said: "We are very even-handed: if we were partisan we would be dead in the water."

Guess who: From Essex Man to Old Labour

TO AVOID legal problems the characters are distillations of a number of real-life MPs. But viewers will try to spot the politicians being caricatured.

□ Terry Dunning (Con): Essex man elected in 1983 election; speaks like a market trader and is the Tory whip most MPs are scared of — a party fixer and bully, who made his fortune in the late 1970s running a car-crunching business.

□ Vernon Du Chêne (Con): Former Secretary of State.

But there are controversial storylines about a gay Labour MP being ousted, a Tory MP and Lloyd's name on the brink of bankruptcy, and another Tory on the re-selection "chicken run".

If real-life MPs take exception to the 10-part series, Michael Brown, the Conservative MP for Brigg and Cleethorpes who acted as an adviser, could be blamed.

"If it all goes wrong, it will probably be my fault," he said. "It is drama and entertainment, but I think this pro-

gramme will restore faith in politicians to a certain extent. I use the parallel of The Bill or London's Burning."

Mr Brown, who confirmed he was homosexual after being publicly outed by the News of the World, advised on the storyline in an episode where a senior Labour MP faces a similar dilemma.

Sir Antony Jay, co-author of Yes Minister and another adviser, said party spin doctors would be foolish to attack the programme: "The sensible thing would be for them

to take the makers out for lunch and drinks as often as possible."

Mr Armitage said: "We spent six months researching and a lot of the stories were discarded because they were too fantastic: no-one would have believed them."

The drama ignores the front benches. "All the characters are backbenchers; they are the Rosenbergs and Gulliderns of Parliamentary politics and we see political life through their eyes," he said.

Two charges were at issue. In the first, Kevin, aged 36, was accused of conspiring

The makers boast the series will be topical up to the minute of transmission. The first episode features a by-election and goes out at 9.30pm on February 1, hours before the declaration at Hemsworth.

Credulity is, however, strained by the result with Tory candidate David Dashwood romping home.

Annie's Bar is a famous Westminster watering hole for journalists to invite MPs, but for the series it has been transformed into an all-purpose bar where MPs of all parties meet.

"Annie's Bar is our Rover's Return and the corridors of Westminster are our Brookside Close," said Mr Armitage.

Although the series is being edited by Prince Edward, Ardent Productions, his involvement has been minimal according to Channel 4. He was present at the first reading through of scripts and apparently enjoyed a series of jokes at the expense of his family.

He was in Ireland yesterday on an official two-day visit and missed the launch at Westminster. Even if he had wanted to attend he would have been barred because of the convention that royalty does not set foot in the Commons.



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Maxwells cleared of fraud after 131-day trial that cost public £25m

Continued from page 1

the process of bringing to justice those responsible for City fraud.

But George Staple, the director of the SFO, insisted the outcome of the case would not damage the organisation's future. "It was a prosecution that had to be brought. We must respect the jury's decision. I would not see it as a waste of taxpayers' money."

He added: "It is our job to conduct a thorough investigation. That has happened. In this case, the jury considered the matter for many days and have reached a verdict. The criminal justice system has

functioned in the way it is designed to." There would be no internal inquiry, he said.

In the courtroom, immediately after the verdicts, the Crown applied for and was granted a seven-day moratorium during which to consider whether any of the remaining charges in the Maxwell affair should proceed to trial. Kevin is named in some of the outstanding charges.

Alun Jones QC, Kevin's barrister and the undoubtedly star of the case, told Lord Justice Phillips, presiding, that "it would be... oppressive to seek to try him again at vast

public expense". The verdict showed, said Mr Jones, that the defendants "acted honestly at the worst moments of the group's history".

Kevin spent 21 days in the witness box, describing his father as a bully, Ian and Mr Trachtenberg did not give evidence.

The case arose in the wake of Robert Maxwell's death, reported on November 5, 1991, when it emerged that a shortfall of more than £400 million existed in Maxwell group pension funds.

Two charges were at issue. In the first, Kevin, aged 36, was accused of conspiring

with his father between July 3 and November 6, 1991, to defraud the trustees and beneficiaries of Bishopsgate Investment Management (BIM), a Maxwell pension-fund company, by dishonestly misusing £100 million, the value of pension fund shares in Israeli printing-equipment company Scitex.

On the second charge, Kevin, Ian, aged 39, and Mr Trachtenberg, aged 42, were accused of conspiring together between November 5 and November 21, 1991, to defraud BIM's trustees and beneficiaries by misusing shares worth £22 million as collateral for

Maxwell-company loans.

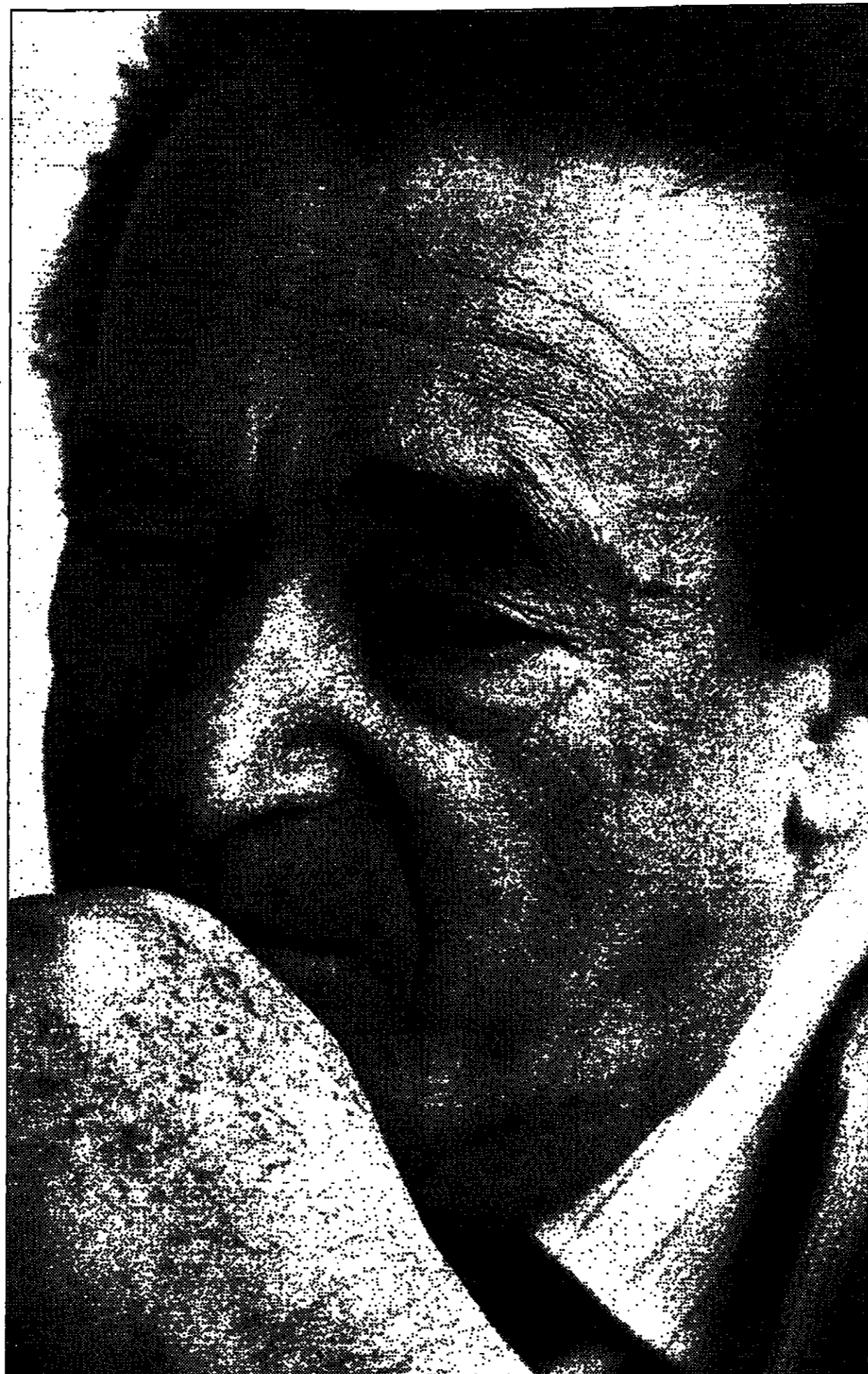
Crown QC Alan Suckling told the jury no person could honestly have believed it to have been in the interests of pensioners — given that the debt-laden Maxwell empire was tottering into bankruptcy — to use their assets in this way. The actions, therefore, had been dishonest.

In defence, Mr Jones suggested the Maxwell empire had always been one group, that assets had routinely been shifted around and that Kevin had acted properly in trying to protect the family interests from a hellish recession.

4 THE MAXWELL VERDICTS

Ian Maxwell cried. Kevin shook the jurors by the hand. For the Maxwells, the trial was over. For the Serious Fraud Office, it was just beginning. One man dominated. Generous one minute, brutal the next: Robert Maxwell...

Reports by DAN ATKINSON, PATRICK DONOVAN, CLARE DYER, THERESA HUNTER, IAN KING, RICHARD NORTON-TAYLOR and PAULINE SPRINGETT



All in the family... In death, paterfamilias Robert Maxwell (left) dominated the trial. Penurious Kevin (top), makes his way to court by Underground train, while his brother Ian (centre) arrives on foot with wife Laura. Kevin's wife Pandora (bottom) followed proceedings

MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: EAMONN MCCABE

The trial's true defendant reaches

Spectral presence of the wheeler-dealer born in Slovenia as Jan Hoch leaves his sons to fight alone for their reputations

HE WAS the unseen defendant, the invisible presence throughout the trial. At one point, Alun Jones QC invited jurors to imagine what answers Robert Maxwell would have given had he been in the dock, but there seemed no way of mentally conjuring up the tycoon in the air-conditioned, computerised courtroom. Not only was its ambience somewhere between a sixth-form classroom and an air-traffic control centre, just about as un-Maxwellian as it is possible to get, but Mr Jones on November 29 declared the entire trial was a result of Maxwell's death. Had the publisher lived, "the group would not have collapsed".

Much of the evidence concerning Robert Maxwell was as expected: a "brutal" board meeting chaired by the tycoon, who slammed his fists on the table and accused fellow directors of being "disloyal bastards"; the "commanding presence" of a man who dominated every meeting he attended; the mogul for whom the law was there to be stretched. Even the better side of his nature, as disclosed in court, was not exactly full of surprises: it was not news that, in the words of Kevin, "he could be generous, he could be charming", nor, as was later testified, that he was highly thought of in Israel. Rather it was the duller side of Maxwell that jolted the observer, the evidence of a millionaire who asked his wife for a separation but spent Christmas with her just the same, who regularly raised himself over the side of his boat when he wasn't snoring so loudly the aforementioned wife was driven to

seek a cabin of her own, who prided himself on never having bilked on a bank debt.

This was the Maxwell whose auditors, Coopers & Lybrand, never suspected he was "indulging in criminal or undesirable activities" and about whom his daughter-in-law, Kevin's wife Pandora, could say: "I didn't have to like him... He didn't have to like me."

Above all, this was Maxwell as the standard issue 1980s business star: he had saved a famous British company, the printer, BPC - from collapse, and thus stood alongside saviours like Sir John Harvey-Jones (ICI), Sir Michael Edwardes (British Leyland) and Lord King (British Airways).

He had gone on to buy a reasonably healthy company (Mirror group) and to run it in his own way, with mixed results. And finally, at the peak of the boom, in 1982, he overreached himself fatally, borrowing hugely to pay \$2.6 billion (£1.7 billion) for US publisher Macmillan, a company worth perhaps \$1 billion less than that.

Far from being alone in this reckless behaviour, the Maxwell empire was surrounded by look-alikes: British & Commonweath, Coleridge and Brent Walker. Everyone was doing it. And the Maxwell group collapsed, when it came, was not even the biggest casualty of the depression: losses at the Bank of Credit and Commerce Inter-

national dwarfed the bills Robert Maxwell had run up.

But the mystery surrounding Robert Maxwell's early life and career - and the further mystique shrouding his connections with intelligence services - meant he could never be just another tycoon.

His early life was spent in abject poverty. He was born under the name Jan Ludvik Hoch on June 10 1923, in the Slovakian village of Solotvino, the son of Orthodox Jewish farm labourers. Had the second world war not intervened, Maxwell might very well have become a farmer himself, but at the age of 15, having enjoyed little formal education, he found himself fighting for the Czech army in central Europe. Aware of the peril of being a Jew in a Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia - Maxwell's family were among those slaughtered at Auschwitz, and he himself was arrested and tortured by the Nazis at one point - Maxwell fought his way across France with the Czech Legion, arriving in Liverpool in 1940.

One of the best-known examples of Maxwell's mercantile career got under way. Robert Maxwell's achievements as a businessman are well documented, but what is less clear is his relationship with the government of the old eastern bloc, and in particular his involvement with the old Soviet Union.

His entanglements with foreign governments, notably in the Soviet bloc, were encouraged from the beginning by British intelligence. MI6 prompted Maxwell, initially through his Pergamon Press, to publish scientific works by Russian and east European writers. Maxwell first caught the attention of the intelligence agencies through his command of languages. George Kennedy, Young, head of MI6's economic section in the late 1940s, contacted Charles Hambro, the banker who was a senior figure in the wartime Special Operations Executive, who agreed to help set up Pergamon.

Both sides in the cold war used Maxwell to their own advantage as he developed a network of top-level contacts in communist Europe, with the help of hagiographies of such men as Nicolae Ceausescu, Erich Honecker, and Leonid Brezhnev.

Later, he helped to arrange commercial deals and promote bilateral relations between Israel and Russia and Israel and Balkan countries. He is also alleged to have laundered money from arms sales to Iran in the 1980s. Claims that the arms sales, from eastern bloc countries, were sanctioned by Israel were denied at the time by the then Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Shamir.

John Major said after Maxwell's death in 1991 that the publisher had provided him with "valuable insights" into the attempted coup against Gorbachev in the summer of that year.

After the collapse of communism, Maxwell is believed to have been used by the former Soviet elite, including KGB agents, to shift large sums of money to the west, including Lichtenstein. But it all came to an end on



Mr Trench said: "There was a range of degrees of guilt and responsibility. At one end, Robert Maxwell was the most guilty and at the other the pensioners the most innocent."

"Many pensioners would have been happier if the money collected from the City had been raised through a fine rather than a voluntary contribution. Then we would have a clearer idea where the other degrees of guilt lay."

Ms Needham was no great fan of Robert Maxwell after 20 years with Pety's Printers in Leeds. She was determined he would not destroy the lives of hundreds of Leeds pensioners.

She attempted many stunts, such as chaining herself to railings outside Parliament in fruitless efforts to speak to the Prime Minister or the Social Security Secretary.

One of her lieutenants died of a heart attack and the other from a stroke on the eve of lobbying visits to London - deaths, she says, brought on by stress and worry. It comes as cold comfort to



Reduced to tears... Ivy Needham asks: "Who was responsible for what we went through?" PHOTOGRAPH: DON MCPHEE

minimum solvency requirements for schemes, giving trustees greater powers, calling on auditors and actuaries to blow the whistle, and establishing a compensation scheme, regulator and ombudsman to sort out problems.

But many of the original proposals were watered down and the pensions industry accepts that the new legislation would not stop an employer

bent on fraud. This has been the pensioners' greatest defeat. Mr Trench says: "Very vulnerable people suffered years of turmoil and distress and the least we wanted from all

this was a safer pensions regime. That has not happened. When will the Government realise how terribly important pensions are - and how vital it is to protect them?"

So, who stole our money?

PENSIONERS/City institutions should have been in the dock, say campaigners

IVY NEEDHAM was one of hundreds of pensioners up and down the country who broke down in tears of disbelief yesterday when they heard the verdict in the Maxwell trial.

Ivy spoke for them all when she said: "When is someone going to tell us who stole our pensions?"

Now aged 70 and blind, Ms Needham, who received an MBE in the New Year's honours list for her campaigning efforts on behalf of Maxwell pensioners, remains convinced that at least 100 Leeds pensioners died prematurely because Robert Maxwell pilaged their pension fund.

able to pay our bills or when the money would dry up."

Maxwell Pensioners chairman Ken Trench has called for the early publication of a report into how regulators failed to stop \$440 million disappearing from the fund, which should reveal where the blame lay.

He admitted that many of his 32,000 members would be infuriated by the verdict, but lay the blame firmly at the door of the City's system of self-regulation.

stood in the dock and faced a day of reckoning. Mr Trench said: "There was a range of degrees of guilt and responsibility. At one end, Robert Maxwell was the most guilty and at the other the pensioners the most innocent."

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سوانح الجرم

THE MAXWELL VERDICTS 5

Now wrangling starts over SFO and juries

THE SYSTEM/Labour seeks inquiry while lawyers say lessons of past failures were applied to the latest trial



Maxwell's empire

What Robert Maxwell owned when he died - and where it went

68% of Maxwell Communication Corporation

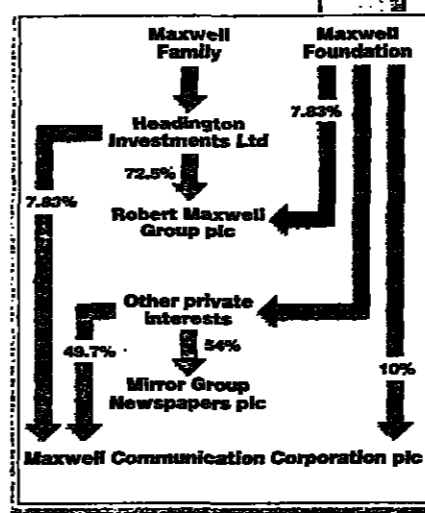
- which owned
One (Macmillan Computer Publishing) - sold to Paramount for \$157 million
Berlitz - sold to Fukutaka Publishing for £144 million in Nov 1991
Painini - stake sold Sep 1992 to Bain Gallo
Nimbus Records - sold Sep 1992 for £20m to DLJ Merchant Banking
Maxwell Consumer Publishing - sold for £5m in 1992
International Learning Systems (Japan) - sold for £5m to Falcon Press
Official Airline Guides - sold to Reed for £417m - Sept 1993
Collier - sold to Italians for £29m in Sep 1993
Molecular Design - floated Oct Autumn 1993, raising \$90m
Macmillan/McGraw Hill School Publishing - to McGraw Hill for \$338m - Oct 1993
Macmillan Inc bought by Paramount for £383m in November 93

Private interests

- Through Headington Investments and Robert Maxwell Group
Maxwell Aviation - sold to management for £32.5m, Jan 93
Lafayette (yacht) - bought by Dr Hanza Ekoley for £3m in Aug 1992
AGB International - sold to Taylor Nelson for £14.5m in Mar 92
Property - various disposals, raising up to £100m
Maxwell House, Holborn Circus - bought by Mirror Group
The Independent (8%) 2.3% sold to Coru, rest unknown
50% of Thomas Cook America - sold to David Paresky in Jan 1993
Reading FC (stake) - sold to John Madejski in 1992
Oxford Utd FC - sold for £10,000 in May 1992
The European - bought by the Barclay brothers for £2m in Jan 92
Berliner Zeitung (50%) - sold to Gruner & Jahr in Feb 1992
Modine (Israeli newspaper) - sold to MRT, Israeli publishing group
Robert Maxwell Business School - now the Sofia International Management Centre
New York Daily News - sold to Mort Zuckerman for £24m, 18 Jan 1993

54% stake in Mirror Group Newspapers

- which owned
25% Quebecor publicly auctioned off on 23 Sep 1993
25% Donahoe
Daily Mirror
Sunday Mirror
Daily Record
Sunday People
Sporting Life



The things they say

It is our job to conduct a thorough investigation. This has happened in this case. It is our responsibility to ensure defendants are fairly prosecuted and that has also happened. The jury considered the matter for many days and have reached their verdict. The criminal justice system has functioned in the way that it is designed to George Staple, director, Serious Fraud Office

He was capable of being extremely charming to people, he was capable of winning but he was also capable of verbal brutality in meetings, public dressing-downs not only of his children but also his senior managers Kevin again

Fine, the law is the law, but I'll stretch it Kevin again

We do not say Robert Maxwell was an heroic figure. Far from it Alun Jones QC, for Kevin

Ian Maxwell fully understands the need for a public catharsis, a

public examination... He, more than anybody, has been waiting for today and the evidence Edmund Lawson QC, for Ian Maxwell, who did not give evidence

They said they couldn't stop the wheels of business... they didn't give a stuff about my father Kevin on demands for money from US investment bankers Lehman Brothers shortly after Robert Maxwell's death

Something you've heard in this case is that these boys worked hard, did they not? It was not all caviar, it was not all luxury, it was hard work Edmund Lawson QC



Survivors... Ghislaine Maxwell (top) on board the vessel which bore her name addresses the media, while her brother Philip and mother Elizabeth (centre) arrive at a Canary Islands court investigating the death. The trial's third defendant, Larry Trachtenberg (bottom), was yesterday acquitted of fraud

Out from beyond his watery grave

Bonfire Night 1991, when a stunned world learned of Robert Maxwell's death at sea. Suggestions as to how he met his end were as lurid as the tales surrounding his life. Of his death, this much is known. Maxwell flew from London to board the yacht Lady Ghislaine at Gibraltar on Thursday, October 31, 1991, sailing to Madeira, before cruising around the Canaries. He was last seen alive at 4.25am on Tuesday, November 5, when a crew member saw him straggling on the deck. At 4.45, he called to ask for the air conditioning to be turned down. At 11am a call from New York was put through, but when no reply was received, the ship's captain, Gus Rankin, went to Maxwell's cabin to check if he was there. On discovering that Maxwell was missing, Rankin organised a thorough check of the boat, and following a third fruitless search, he raised the alarm. Maxwell's naked body was found floating off Gran Canaria by a rescue helicopter at 5.55pm that day. Lying face

up, with his arms and legs splayed, his body had apparently suffered no damage from the boat's propellers. It had resurfaced after only 13 hours in the water, at most, compared with the average time of two to three days taken by victims of drowning to come to the surface. Theories about the cause of death still abound, with the local judge, Luis Gutierrez, first telling reporters that Maxwell was dead when he fell into the sea, probably dying from a heart attack. A subsequent report for Maxwell's loss adjusters prepared by Dr Iain West, head of forensic medicine at Guy's Hospital, London, suggested the tycoon had killed himself. Another theory discounted by Dr West was one heavily leaned on by the defence during Kevin and Ian Maxwell's trial. In his report, Dr West said he doubted whether Maxwell had fallen into the sea accidentally, unless he had been leaning "well over the side". During his trial, Kevin Maxwell put forward another theory. He said that his

father, like many men who travelled on board the yacht, had been in the habit of urinating over the side of the vessel in the middle of the night. He cited evidence from Dr Jane Ward, a lecturer in physiology at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals, who quoted a study showing 40 out of 200 men had been found to experience loss of consciousness after urinating in the middle of the night. The fall-out from his death and the immediate post-Maxwell period hung heavy in the air even as the trial opened last summer. Maxwell's publisher clearly based on Maxwell. Not only was the character implicated in a murder, but "Maxwell's" supposed incarceration in a Nazi death camp was shown to have been bogus; he had, in fact, been a camp guard. If the trial served any purpose, it was to dispense with the back to life size: an over-confident 1980s tycoon with insufficient respect for the law or other people's property. He was not a mass murderer, nor even - on the evidence - a mass swindler. As testimony took the court back to the recessionary days of 1991, Maxwell's behaviour seemed uncomfortably close to that of millions across the country, albeit on a larger scale. As householders were raiding children's piggy banks and surrendering insurance policies in a frantic attempt to pay mortgages and avoid repossession, so Maxwell was scooping up cash from any source to keep his empire afloat. In those last desperate days, Robert Maxwell, this strange man who had never really fitted in, perhaps achieved the one thing he had craved since arriving in Britain at the dawn of the last war. He became one of us.

Several City reputations, 131 days, £25m, and many 'bundles' later...

THE TRIAL/It was a record, with the jury spending 11 nights in an hotel. Jurors and a QC went ill. And the judge became a Lord

IT LASTED 131 days, it cost perhaps £25 million and, at different times, both a QC and a defendant collapsed. The former returned to court, the latter did not. The jury went into the record books, clocking up 11 nights in an hotel, breaking the previous Old Bailey record of eight nights in a case in 1982. Half the jurors had to be examined by a doctor, and two were declared unfit for duty at different times. Kevin and Ian Maxwell were arrested on June 18 1992. Their trial opened a few days short of three years later, and they had to wait a further eight months to hear the judgment of their peers. All the pious hopes expressed by the anti-fraud authorities for speedier, simpler trials once again came to nothing. The trial was neither speedy nor simple. Jurors were directed to a mind-numbing array of documents and "bundles", each bearing catalogue numbers as specific as the droning voices of counsel. Those who had hoped that the selection of a common-law charge against the defendants would fulfil demands that fraud cases be made intelligible to the average juror would have been sadly disappointed. Only at the very end of the trial did either side seem to come close to the heart of the issue, that of a "dishonest agreement" among the conspirators. And it seemed to the neutral observer that, by the close of play, the Crown had failed to prove that such an agreement had been struck. The indictment itself, however, seemed cleverly crafted to ensure a "result" for the prosecution. Ian Maxwell (likely to cut a

sympathetic figure as the brother unversed in the ways of high finance) was bracketed with Larry Trachtenberg (positioned as a former LSE lecturer to appeal subconsciously to a juror's respect for academia), and Kevin, on a second count of conspiracy to defraud. This appeared to be the dispensable charge, the first stage of the rocket, which could be lost by the Crown without too much regret. And, indeed, neither Ian

were unable to pay for their own defence. Not only did the trial eat money and time, it also took its toll on the health of some participants. In June, Michael Hill came close to collapsing in court. On July 23, the trial was suspended after defendant Robert Bunn - co-indicted on the second charge - was taken ill. On July 27, it emerged he had suffered a heart attack. The jury was relieved of its duty to reach a verdict in his case. Two jurors fell sick. Six in all were examined by a doctor. The case also devoured reputations. Peter Leister, former chairman of Thorn EMI, was accused of forging a document to save his own skin. Accountants Coopers & Lybrand declared that they found "nothing untoward" in the Maxwell empire and were accused of keeping quiet about Maxwell borrowings in order to keep a valued client. Lloyds Bank confirmed that, at one point, its Maxwell loans totalled nearly £500 million, almost one quarter of the bank's market value. Lebanese businessman Roger Tamraz, who came to testify that he had been involved in putting together a Middle Eastern syndicate to salvage the Maxwell empire, had it put to him by the Crown that he had been accused of involvement in a fraud - and responded that it was an invention of his political enemies in the Lebanon. Few touched by the trial emerged unscathed, but one key player managed to enhance his standing. At the hearing's opening, the judge had been plain Mr Justice Phillips. By its conclusion, he had become Lord Justice Phillips.

Bullied son impressed his father's creditors

KEVIN/After father's death, youngest son emerged as most capable of brothers

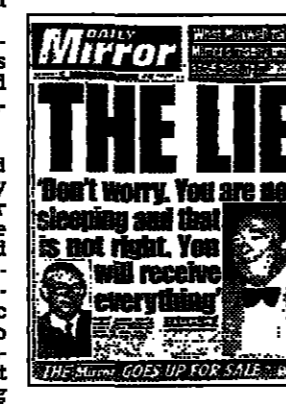
FANY of Robert Maxwell's seven children inherited the disgraced tycoon's business acumen, it was the youngest son, Kevin. This won him no special protection from his father's bullying. For all the indignities heaped on him, Kevin was always regarded as the natural successor. He held the grandiose title of chief executive of Maxwell Communication Corporation, but was kept on a short rein by his father, who typically spoke to him on the phone up to 20 times a day. Having been posted to the US, Kevin was called back to London at his father's whim and at one stage was making at least two return journeys across the Atlantic every week. After Robert's death Kevin emerged as the most capable of the two brothers employed as directors in the Maxwell

and family maintain an upper middle-class lifestyle by buying them the 16-bedroom Moulshold Manor, a sixteenth century manor house set in 10 acres on the Berkshire-Oxfordshire borders. Relatives and godparents have chipped in to pay school fees for the couple's three children: Matilda, eight, Edward, seven, and five-year-old Eloise. Not bad for a man who had built up £406.5 million debts when he was made Britain's biggest ever bankrupt in September 1992. Although the vast majority of his time has been spent preparing for the trial, both Kevin and his brother Ian earn £20,000-a-year working for a business consultancy founded by Jean Baddely, who worked for their father for more than 30 years. Undoubtedly, a financier with as much natural talent as Kevin is woefully underemployed. But he might find it a little difficult persuading anybody to offer him a job.

A PR man way out of his depth

IAN/Strain told as he tried to cope with explaining tangled web of share deals

YOU could see the strain growing daily on Ian Maxwell's face as he struggled to keep up a front as the group's public relations spokesman immediately after his father's death. Ian, now aged 39, lacked the charisma to take on such a high-profile media role, and clearly had little grasp on the events which had led to the Maxwell group's collapse. Ian nominally enjoyed equal seniority with his younger brother Kevin, as Robert Maxwell had made a point of jointly promoting both sons. Nevertheless, Ian's only real expertise was in the field of marketing and he was unable to cope with the web of share deals set up by his father. Although Ian was a director of 200 companies, Robert Maxwell typically treated his son with contempt, once famously



ches

Hostel blaze still a mystery as suspects freed

German fire town mourns refugees

Ian Traynor in Lübeck

ABANDONED, the large white Victorian house stands alone on the Lübeck docks. Until Thursday it was a ghetto for 50 Africans and Arabs seeking Western shelter; now it has become a charnel-house for the foreigners denied integration here.

Priests and prime ministers made their pilgrimage to the gutted building yesterday, outraged locals brought flowers and candles. Immigrants, friends and relatives of the 10 who died in Thursday's pre-dawn inferno, stood sentinel in snow and sub-zero temperatures, still keen with grief and incomprehension.

"We're so shaken, we didn't think anything like this could happen," said Diangano Benkindo, aged 40, who is from Kinshasa and has been in Germany for 20 years. "But I suppose that's what's bound to happen when we have to live in places like this."

Several of those who died were from Zaire and had been in Germany for more than five years waiting for their asylum requests to be processed. People like Monique Bunge, aged 25, who jumped to her death clutching her three-year-old daughter, who died in hospital. Or Landu

Makudila, aged 29, from Kinshasa, who died with her four children and stepdaughter.

Police expect the death toll to rise, as some people are believed to be buried in inaccessible parts of the building.

Yambuta Makele, aged 39, a friend of the Makudilas, is unsure whether the blaze was murderous arson by white supremacist German youths or a ghastly accident. But he knows what ought to be done. "They treat us like animals. They want to cage us in these places and then forget about us — out of sight, out of mind. All of these hostels must be closed down and we should be given normal flats among Germans."

Lübeck, a pretty and prosperous little Baltic port with a proud trading lineage going back to the medieval Hanseatic League, is in shock. Candlelit vigils mourn the dead. Local radio hosted anguished phone-ins about xenophobia and played African music. Schoolchildren staged an anti-racism march, and a packed town-hall meeting heard the mayor, Michael Böttcher, demand action to halt hostility to foreigners.

He virtually sanctioned the campaign of civil disobedience against Germany's tightened asylum laws and backed the Africans' demands to be properly housed out of the

ghetto. "Integration, not isolation," he urged.

The cause of the inferno is a mystery. After suggesting they had solid grounds for suspicion against three German youths detained near the scene shortly after the fire broke out, the police released the trio yesterday. They said it would be next week before they could tell — if at all — whether the blaze was an accident or post-war Germany's worst act of racist violence.

Uncomfortable for officials in Bonn, Lübeck's day of shock coincided with Germany's first government-declared day of remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust.

Lübeck's CID chief, Winfried Taborall, said there had been no appeal for help from the hostel before the blaze, nor any history of threats against it. But Mr Benkindo said there was a failed petrol bomb attack on the hostel six months ago which the authorities did not want to discuss.

And not all the locals peering at the burnt-out docklands shell were sympathetic to the plight of the residents.

"Oh, it's probably their own fault," grunted one elderly German woman smoking in bed. "The woman beside him nodded before launching into a tirade about 'all the criminals' entering Germany from eastern Europe."



Horzade greetings... A resident of Gorazde waves to a loved one arriving in a convoy of aid and civilians, escorted by Nato, which arrived in the town yesterday. The enclave of Gorazde was besieged by Serbs for more than three years. PHOTOGRAPH: JACQUELINE ARZT

Bosnian rivals free POWs as tension eases

Julian Borger in Sarajevo

HUNDREDS of Bosnian prisoners of war were released by their captors and were waiting to be reunited with their families last night in a general defusion of tension across the country in the run-up to a deadline imposed by the Dayton peace agreement.

As evening fell on Sarajevo airport, trucks escorted by French troops arrived bringing prisoners from jails on both sides of the former front line. The released detainees were due to be registered by Red Cross workers on a bulldozed patch of gravel before being allowed to meet relatives who had waited anxiously all afternoon.

But the prisoner handover was delayed last night while government and Serb officials waited with Red Cross workers for other prisoners to arrive from around the country. Over 900 were due to be released.

Until noon yesterday, arguments over the fate of thousands of Muslims still missing from nearly four years of war and ethnic cleansing threatened to delay the prisoner release and jeopardise the first big target date set by Dayton.

But talks yesterday between US and Bosnian government officials broke the deadlock, agreeing that more effort would be put into tracing the missing in return for a complete release of the estimated 400 Serb prisoners in government hands.

Nato's Implementation Force (IFOR), which is responsible for policing the Dayton plan, reported widespread compliance with other aspects of the deadline.

General Michael Walker, the commander of Nato ground forces in Bosnia, inspected frontline bunkers around Sarajevo abandoned long before the midnight deadline.

"This is a microcosm of what is happening all along the confrontation line through Bosnia-Herzegovina," the British general told reporters.

For troops around the country were patrolling the 600-mile front line, to make sure both sides had withdrawn the 2km (1.25 miles) stipulated by the Dayton agreement.

Nato officials said that a full assessment of compliance

with yesterday's deadline could only be made over the next two days. Yesterday 50 heavy weapons were still in-situ, the demilitarised zone, according to the chief Nato spokesman in Sarajevo, Lieutenant-Colonel Mark Kaymer.

Nato sources said most of the weapons were in the north of the country, in areas patrolled by US forces. It was unclear whether they would be withdrawn by midnight.

Another target set by the Dayton plan was the withdrawal of foreign forces from Bosnian soil, including "mujahedin" Muslim volunteers from Afghanistan, Iran and other Islamic states, as well as Croatian and Serbian troops.

'Underdogs' promised arms

THE Muslim-Croat Federation in Bosnia will be given artillery, helicopters and communications equipment to help it hold its own against better armed Bosnian Serbs, a US state department official said yesterday.

Under the Dayton peace accord, the federation can receive light weapons from March 15 and heavier arms 90 days later. The official said other countries would be asked to underwrite the cost and that the aim was to provide the Muslims and Croats with Nato-style weapons and gear. — AP.

Yesterday, Nato officials said there were still about 100 mujahedin fighters under Bosnian army escort in the west of the country but they expected them to cross the border over the course of the weekend.

● The fate of some 650 Bosnian Muslim detainees at two camps within Serbia proper remains uncertain. A Red Cross spokesman said yesterday that "alleged prisoners in Serbia cannot come within the concerns of the Dayton agreement, which applies to the terrain of Bosnia-Herzegovina." Ed Vulliamy writes.

● The group falls within the ambit of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. A UNHCR spokesman said yesterday the 650 were "definitely refugees", while acknowledging that they have no freedom of movement and are in reality "internees".

Geneva talks set to secure treaty on nuclear test ban

There is strong momentum for its signing, but questions remain about the positions of China and India. Ian Black reports

DOZENS of diplomats get down to hard bargaining on Monday in the august surroundings of Geneva's Palais des Nations, with an ambitious goal that studied Kennedy and Khrushchev but finally seems attainable in 1996: a global ban on nuclear explosions.

Signing a comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT) has been the highest priority since the nuclear powers secured the indefinite extension of the non-proliferation treaty (NPT) on their terms last May.

Experts predict that it will be achieved when 38 countries gather at the Conference for Nuclear Disarmament, though there is concern about India-led attempts to link the ban to wider efforts towards nuclear disarmament — and uncertainty about whether China will agree to abandon testing.

"There is strong political will," the Polish ambassador to the conference, Ludwik Dembinski, said. "I do believe we will have the treaty this year. I don't see any country willing to take the blame for wrecking the negotiations."

Three of the world's five declared nuclear powers, France, the United States and Britain, have publicly backed

"zero yield" testing, which would mean an end to nuclear explosions of any size and would force scientists to forgo deserts or atolls for computer and laboratory simulation.

Russia, currently observing a testing moratorium, is expected to join them, though some observers foresee difficulties if hawkish trends in Moscow get the upper hand.

China is so far the only declared nuclear power with reservations about the scope of the treaty: it conducted two tests last year — one just days after the NPT review had ended with pledges of "utmost restraint".

Beijing wants to allow for the continuation of "peaceful" nuclear power with reservations about the scope of the treaty: it conducted two tests last year — one just days after the NPT review had ended with pledges of "utmost restraint".

Public anger at tests conducted by China and most especially France in the past year have sustained momentum for a CTBT. Australia is working behind the scenes to produce a draft text by next month — without the present 1,300 bracketed sections indicating disagreements.

Some independent experts

believe an end to testing will remove the cutting edge from nuclear weapons technology and begin a process of "denuclearisation by obsolescence". The nuclear powers disagree.

Diplomats worry that time is running out if the CTBT is to be presented, as promised, to the next session of the United Nations General Assembly in September.

Earlier, this month India tried to lead other members of the non-aligned movement to link progress on the test ban to broader progress on disarmament.

"The non-aligned see nuclear disarmament as a stick to beat the West rather than a serious business," a British official said. "It is difficult to know whether this is rhetoric or substance."

India has always criticised the NPT as nuclear "apartheid", which allows the nuclear haves to keep their arsenals, while shutting out the have-nots. But with reports that India may be planning its own test, its principled opposition looks distinctly pragmatic.

"India has pulled back from the brink because it didn't want to become exposed as opposing the CTBT," a leading arms control expert said.

Yet Delhi cannot be ignored: Pakistan will not sign up to a CTBT if India does not, and there is a danger that Arab countries, led by Egypt, might revive the controversial issue of Israel's non-adherence to the NPT.

Serbia 'must help tribunal or face new sanctions'

John Palmer in Brussels

THE United Nations' chief war crimes prosecutor, Richard Goldstone, said yesterday international sanctions might have to be reimposed on former Yugoslavia because of the refusal of Serbia's President Milosevic to co-operate in handing over indicted war criminals.

Speaking after a meeting with the secretary-general of Nato, Javier Solana, and the I-FOR military commander, General George Joulwan, Mr Goldstone said the Belgrade government was withholding all co-operation with the war crimes investigation.

The International Court of Justice in The Hague has issued arrest warrants for several Bosnian Serb leaders, including Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic, who went to ground after the Dayton peace agreement. The UN suspended economic sanctions against Serbia as an inducement for Slobodan Milosevic to co-operate to secure a peace settlement in Bosnia.

"Unfortunately, I cannot say that we have ever received or are we receiving the co-operation we are entitled to from the government of Serbia and Montenegro," Mr Goldstone said.

"Nothing has changed since the Dayton agreement even though it commits the signatories to help detain indicted war criminals and ensure their speedy transfer to the international court in The Hague."

He added: "In the case of a persistent refusal to co-operate by Serbia, this could involve the reimposition of economic sanctions."

News in brief

Polish spy spat intensifies
Poland's new president suggested opening secret police files yesterday, while Prime Minister Lech Walesa denied Russian newspaper allegations that he had spied for Moscow.

While president Mr Walesa opposed opening the files and ousted his prime minister who backed the move, "I regret it was not done," he said yesterday. — AP.

Friars on file
In an effort to weed out troublemakers, Buddhist monks

will have to carry official identification cards similar to those already required for all ordinary Thai citizens, it was reported yesterday. — AP.

Dissident freed
Beijing authorities yesterday released leading dissident Liu Xiaobo, sending him back to his parents' home in north-east China after more than seven months in police custody without charge. — Reuter.

Marcos millions
Negotiators admitted failure yesterday after a five-day meeting in Hong Kong to settle the fate of an estimated

\$475 million (£300 million) banked in Switzerland by the late Philippines dictator Ferdinand Marcos. — AP.

Bogotá jailbreak
At least 25 inmates escaped yesterday from the Bogotá prison from which Cali cartel drug lord José Santacruz Londono escaped last week, local radio said. — Reuter.

Walcott sued
A woman is suing Nobel Prize-winning poet and playwright Derek Walcott, saying he threatened to give her a failing grade unless she had sex with him while she was a student at Boston University. — AP.

Slovak stars
Steve McQueen the late American film star was in fact one of the most illustrious sons of Slovakia, according to a Slovakian newspaper. The Novy Cas newspaper said the actor, whose Slovakian father allegedly emigrated to the United States after the first world war, joins other supposed Slovaks, Paul Newman and Andy Warhol. — AP.

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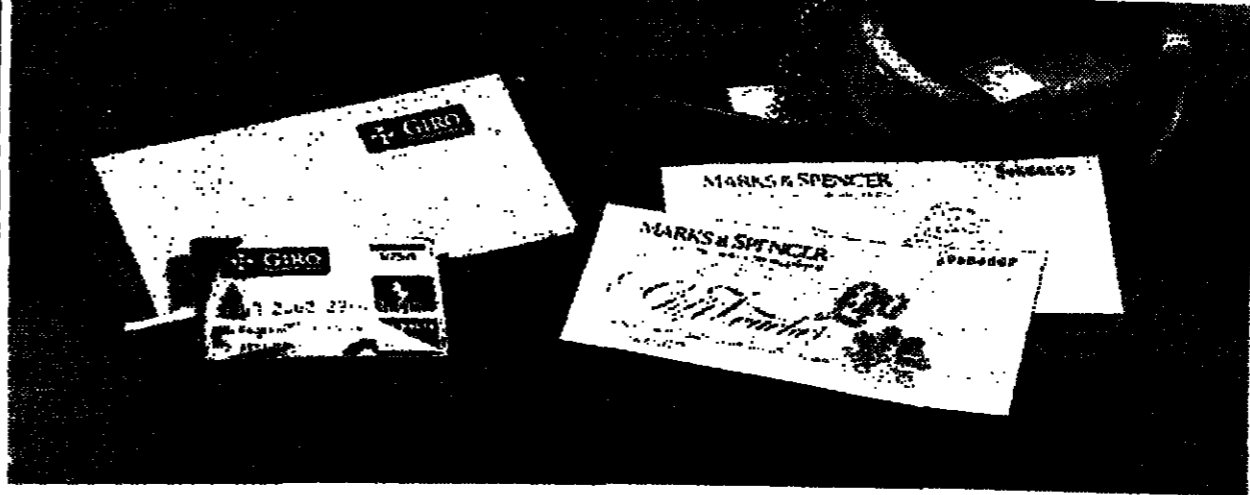
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The Guardian Saturday January 20 1991

FOCUS: KOREA'S CRISIS OF INTEGRITY 7

Past sins at the service of politics

The current investigation of a brutal 1980 military massacre involves as much political reality as a zeal for the truth, writes **Andrew Higgins** in Kwangju

THE cobbler lay in a coma for four days, his skull cracked by repeated blows with heavy clubs, his spine stomped by paratrooper boots, his left leg gouged by a bayonet. After he regained consciousness, an anxious bureaucrat from the Kwangju municipal martial-law command stopped by to see how he was doing. The official suggested a deal: cash in return for silence. Keep quiet, Lee Chong-nam remembers being advised, and he could earn himself a little money. He would also save himself a lot of trouble. Forget the soldiers in camouflage and gas masks who pounced as he cycled back to his shoeshop. Forget how they beat him about the head and shoulder near the Kwangju bus station. Forget how he was left for dead in a pool of blood.

"The government wanted to bury this whole tragedy just as it buried the bodies," says Mr Lee, still so traumatised he visits three clinics a day for acupuncture, physical therapy, psychiatric counselling and a cocktail of Western and herbal medicines. He has not worked since May 18, 1980, the day South Korean soldiers first ran amok on the streets of Kwangju.

The experience left him with a phobia of uniforms. At the sight of a policeman, his hands tremble, his head pounds and sweat pours from his brow.

Today, after 15 years and several false starts, South Korea is trying to confront, explain and — most importantly and dangerously — assign blame for the Kwangju massacre, a pivotal event around which modern politics in the country revolve.

Instead of ordering silence from Mr Lee and other survivors of violence that rapidly escalated from club blows to machine-gun fire, officials today invite them to come forward and tell exactly what they saw when the military moved in to stop student protests.

Escorted by a team of investigators from the state prosecutor's office in Seoul, Mr Lee recently returned to the scene of the crime, a narrow street lined with shops peddling jumbo television sets, computers and other familiar trophies of Asia's tiger economies.

He pointed out the spot where he won the grm distinction of being the first Kwangju citizen seriously injured at the hands of special-

forces troops who had been airlifted from Seoul the previous night. The result of such inquiries is due to be announced next week and will almost certainly mean another accusing finger pointed at South Korea's previous two presidents, Chun Doo-hwan, effectively in charge of the country in 1980, and his loyal protégé, Roh Tae-woo.

Already indicted for pocketing bribes worth hundreds of millions of dollars, the two men are likely to be charged with ordering the use of lethal force in Kwangju. Several of their military cronies have already been arrested because of their own role.

"They should be sentenced to death under the law, like Ceausescu in Romania," suggests Mr Lee, relishing the idea of a summary execution. The death penalty, although possible, is highly unlikely.

All the same, the whole exercise carries a subversive significance that resonates far beyond the city limits of Kwangju, the capital of Korea's traditionally rebellious Cholla region.

Across Asia, leaders justify past and present brutality as an unfortunate but unavoidable precondition for political stability and economic growth in the decade and a half that followed the bloodshed in Kwangju. South Korea enjoyed an almost uninterrupted economic boom, a model keenly studied and then repeated by China after the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989.

China, Indonesia, Burma or any of the other states succeeded by the authoritarian route to prosperity will be less keen to copy South Korea's current experiments. In all such countries, history — and its abuse — is rooted in politics, not facts.

At Mangwoldong cemetery, where 225 of those killed in 1980 are buried, dozens of visitors pay their respects. Even the icy cold of an early morning in January does not keep them away. Next to the tombstone of a former student leader a glass box has been filled with old notebooks and other mementos. Recently added to the collection is the front page of a local newspaper. It has a headline few ever expected to see: "Chun Doo-hwan to be arrested".

A nearby souvenir stall sells graphic widens and books policed with pictures of mutilated bodies from 1980, scenes of carnage not seen in the country since the Korean War.

For years, Mangwoldong



Tough tactics... Seoul police seize a student during a protest demanding punishment of those responsible for the Kwangju violence in 1980 (right and top) PHOTOGRAPH: ANH YOUNG-JOON



'The old regime came to power with blood on its hands. It was born with an irreparable defect of legitimacy.'



Most in Kwangju seem to savour the humiliation of Mr Chun and Mr Roh, but there is little jubilation.

cemetery has been a place of pilgrimage for students from across the country. Today, many of the pilgrims are businessmen, professionals and even former military officers. Lee Jae-yun, an electronics manufacturer from Seoul, took a taxi out to the graveyard between business meetings. An officer in the South Korean military until 1978, he welcomes efforts to get to the bottom of what happened in Kwangju — and punish those responsible. "Only Third World countries have military coups," he sniffs. "I hope we have moved beyond this here."

Across Korea, economic statistics are no longer accepted as the only valid gauge of political legitimacy. "The old regime had a birth defect," says Bae Ho-hahn, president of the Sejong Institute, a think-tank in Seoul. "It came to power with blood on its

hands. It was born with an irreparable defect of legitimacy. This was an incurable disease."

The current investigation into the killings at Kwangju involves as much politics as an inquiry demanded by groups of victims, associations for the bereaved and various other organisations set up since 1980 to judge facts and responsibility.

All the same, it still marks the first serious attempt in the entire region to hold military leaders accountable for their past actions.

The generals who ruled South Korea from a coup d'état in 1961, and through a second coup in 1980, presided over one of the world's fastest-growing economies. A country that ranked alongside Zaire or Sudan at the start of the military's political ascendancy is now on the verge of joining the OECD as a fully paid-up member of the rich nations club.

However, such wealth and dynamism planted the seeds of autocracy's destruction. "Confucian influence is on the decline," says Dr Bae. "Rigid hierarchies and deference to authority are often seen as the two dominant characteristics of Korean confucianism. These two pillars may not have yet entirely collapsed, but they are crumbling."

The military's explanation that soldiers resorted to force to put down an armed uprising orchestrated by North Korea has been ridiculed for years. But, with most of the country's ruling elite tainted either by association or direct involvement, authorities showed scant interest in delving too deeply into what happened, just as the Chinese Communist party cannot afford any debate on the killings around Tiananmen Square.

Until now the most comprehensive survey of the Kwangju massacre was an internal report commissioned by the United States, which still keeps 37,000 troops in South Korea and shares over all command of all troops south of the demilitarised frontier with the north.

It has been an article of faith among student radicals

that the US planned, or at least connived, in a bloodbath in which, officially, about 200 people died. Alternative estimates reach up to 10 times that. The then US president, Ronald Reagan, gave a warm welcome to Mr Chun at the White House less than a year after the massacre, but there

is no evidence to support claims of direct US involvement. Scores of witnesses and victims have come forward to talk to prosecutors in Kwangju. A woman took them to the intersection where a bus she was riding had come under army fire. She was the sole survivor. Recalling the trauma sent her into shock, she is now in hospital recovering. A former student told how troops used flame-throwers as well as heavy machine guns against the city's citizens.

Most in Kwangju seem to savour the humiliation of Mr Chun and Mr Roh, but there is little jubilation. "They should have been brought to court 15 years ago," says Lee Seung-yeon, who was shot twice through the abdomen while waving a South Korean flag in front of

elves wrestling with their convictions over the death penalty. "Before we can forgive them, they must repent," says Father Kim Seong-nyong, who has long campaigned for a full investigation to determine how many people died and who gave the order to use lethal force. "What can we do if they refuse to repent? Our ideals and the real world are different."

Instead of offering his excuses, Mr Chun has gone on the attack, appealing to the courts for protection. He has challenged the legality of a so-called special act that paved the way for his prosecution. It extended a 15-year statute of limitations by ruling that the period begins only at the end of his term in office. He reminds President Kim — his main tormentor — of his own past: "I am a criminal who brought confusion to society, then it is not reasonable that President Kim take responsibility for having come together with such insurgents."

However, suddenly the old assumptions and alliances have been turned upside down. "We want to cut ourselves off from a history that legitimised military coups and military dictatorships," says Sohn Hak-kyu, a former dissident and Oxford graduate who now sits in parliament for the ruling New Korea Party, and serves as the party's official spokesman. "We need a new history. This means not only defining Kwangju as a democratic movement, but also punishing those who suppressed it."



Mr Chun: in charge in 1980

The inquiries will almost certainly point an accusing finger at the previous presidents, Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo



Mr Roh: loyal protégé

the provincial government building on May 21, 1980. "I'm happy, but also very sad it took so long."

There is also deep suspicion about the motives of President Kim Young-sam, who initially opposed any attempt to open the Kwangju case but suddenly changed his mind late last year. The change of heart coincided with signs that he could soon fall victim to his own anti-corruption campaign.

So strong are the cries for vengeance in Kwangju that Catholic priests find them-

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News in brief

Fears for Tibetan boy

AMNESTY International yesterday expressed concern that a six-year-old boy named by the exiled Dalai Lama as Tibetan Buddhism's second most important monk and his family have been missing from their home for eight months and may be under restriction by the authorities.

The group said a Tibetan abbot and more than 50 monks and laypersons were still being detained in a bitter row with China over the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama.

Chinese officials have insisted the boy is safe in Tibet, but have declined to give further details.

Group 'killed Abacha's son'

A group calling itself the United Front for Nigeria's Liberation and claiming to represent opponents of the country's military ruler, General Sani Abacha, said it had caused the plane crash in Kano on Wednesday that killed his oldest son, Ibrahim, and 13 other people.

There was no way to verify the authenticity of its claim, which was sent to journalists. Pro-democracy groups denounced the idea of using violence to remove Gen Abacha. — AP.

Papua deadline

The Indonesian military has given guerrillas of the separatist Free Papua Movement who are holding four British hostages in the province of Irian Jaya "until the end of the week" to free them before it considers other options. The Britons are among 14 people who have been held captive for 12 days, writes *John Aglionby* in Jakarta.

Officers face trial

In a blow to the powerful Honorary military, the country's supreme court has cleared the

UN ready for Iraqi talks

THE United Nations secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has told Iraq he is prepared to hold talks on a resolution which allows oil to be sold in order to buy food on the understanding that its terms cannot be changed, the president of the Security Council said.

Sir John West, Britain's UN ambassador, said: "If the name of the game is talking about the implementation of Resolution 986, there very well will be discussions and nobody's going to object to that — providing the context of those discussions is clearly understood by all concerned."

He was speaking after Britain, the United States, Russia and France had discussed with Mr Boutros-Ghali a letter from Iraq saying it would accept an invitation for talks.

Resolution 986 was adopted by the Security Council to enable Iraq to sell up to £1.2 billion of oil to buy food, medicine and other necessities. — Reuter.

Feud erupts at funeral

THE bitter family infighting that cost the job of N.T. Rama Rao, the Indian film-star turned politician, erupted again at his funeral yesterday, when his widow Lakshmi Parvati was ordered to leave the cortege.

Rama Rao, who sides said died of a heart attack on Thursday, was topped as Andhra Pradesh's chief minister by his son-in-law last year.

When Mrs Parvati climbed aboard the cortege in Hyderabad yesterday, family members ordered her off. — Reuter.

Isamist failure

The leader of Turkey's Islamist Welfare Party, Necmettin Erbakan, yesterday gave up his attempt to form a government after failing to find coalition partners, a party official said. — Reuter.

Bahrain clashes

Security forces in Bahrain clashed with anti-government Shi'ite Muslims in villages in the west of the country and arrested several people, residents said yesterday. Bahrain's Shi'ite majority has been demanding the restoration of parliament, which was dissolved in 1975. — Reuter.

Wanted: Lazy slob

A Norwegian importation and distribution company in Sandefjord, south of Oslo, received 130 applications when it advertised a "boring job" for "indolent people with a total lack of service-mindedness" after receiving no responses to its original advert for a hard-working and friendly salesperson. — AP.

8 SPORTS NEWS

Racing

Bank on Easterly to deliver a double

Ron Cox expects retiring trainer to be one jump ahead at Haydock and Kempton

RACECARDS will never be the same from the start of next month when the name M H Easterly sadly disappears. Miles Henry, always known as Peter, hands the reins at his Malton stables to his son Tim after a distinguished career which sees him retire as the only modern day trainer to send out 1,000 winners Flat and jumps.

showed a smart turn of foot to win by five lengths at Haydock last time. Thornton Gate (2.40) is a handy type who should be suited by this course and distance.

Successful in last year's Lanzarote Hurdle, Trying Again (3.40) is steadily gaining in confidence over fences and looks worth following in the Big Razor Novice Chase.

Back at Haydock, Uncle Ernie (3.00) should be hard to beat in the Garwood Handicap Chase. He was well in contention going to the last fence in the Victor Chandler at Ascot last week before weakening into fifth.



Trials run... Atours faces stiff opposition from Mysliv in today's Haydock Park Champion Hurdle Trial

Nicholson in Festival mood after easy wins by Zabadi and Castle Sweep

ZABADI and Castle Sweep, both trained by David Nicholson, booked their tickets for the Cheltenham Festival in March with impressive wins at Kempton yesterday.

The performance by Zabadi, who will now go for the Triumph Hurdle, justified Nicholson's high hopes for the former John Oxx inmate at the start of the season but probably brought about his life's stewards into improvement in form.

Nicholson explained: "He has always worked like a good horse at home, the best of anything I've got bar none. "But he was awful at Ascot

and after running at Devon he as if he had never been on a raccourse in his life. What's happened here, I don't know. His Flat form was good and I just couldn't understand what was going wrong."

Castle Sweep landed division two of the Extra Daylight Novice Hurdle easing down by 15 lengths. Now unbeaten in five starts, the five-year-old will probably run in the Supreme Novices Hurdle at the Festival.

Haydock with TV form

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Races include 1.30 Putty Road, 1.40 Myrtle, 1.50 Scotland Bank, 2.00 Blythport Giff, 2.10 Potter's Bay, 2.20 Uncle Ernie (alt), 2.30 Forestview.

Colony Stud, 4 Doncaster Millers. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last race.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Races include 1.30 PREMIER LONG DISTANCE HURDLE, 1.40 MYRTLE, 1.50 SCOTLAND BANK, 2.00 BLYTHPORT GIFF, 2.10 POTTER'S BAY, 2.20 UNCLE ERNE (ALT), 2.30 FORESTVIEW.

BBC-2

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Races include 1.30 HAYDOCK PARK CHAMPION HURDLE TRIAL, 1.40 MYRTLE, 1.50 SCOTLAND BANK, 2.00 BLYTHPORT GIFF, 2.10 POTTER'S BAY, 2.20 UNCLE ERNE (ALT), 2.30 FORESTVIEW.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Races include 1.30 PETER BARBER HANDICAP CHASE, 1.40 MYRTLE, 1.50 SCOTLAND BANK, 2.00 BLYTHPORT GIFF, 2.10 POTTER'S BAY, 2.20 UNCLE ERNE (ALT), 2.30 FORESTVIEW.

BBC-2

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Races include 1.30 HAYDOCK PARK CHAMPION HURDLE TRIAL, 1.40 MYRTLE, 1.50 SCOTLAND BANK, 2.00 BLYTHPORT GIFF, 2.10 POTTER'S BAY, 2.20 UNCLE ERNE (ALT), 2.30 FORESTVIEW.

BBC-1

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BBC-2

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Races include 1.30 HAYDOCK PARK CHAMPION HURDLE TRIAL, 1.40 MYRTLE, 1.50 SCOTLAND BANK, 2.00 BLYTHPORT GIFF, 2.10 POTTER'S BAY, 2.20 UNCLE ERNE (ALT), 2.30 FORESTVIEW.

Kempton card with form for the televised races

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Races include 1.40 Flight Lieutenant, 1.50 Challenger Du Lac, 2.00 King's Cross, 2.10 The Flash, 2.20 TRYING AGAIN (imp), 2.30 Colonial Blazer.

Colony Stud, 4 Doncaster Millers. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last race.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Races include 1.40 HAYDOCK PARK CHAMPION HURDLE TRIAL, 1.50 MYRTLE, 2.00 SCOTLAND BANK, 2.10 BLYTHPORT GIFF, 2.20 POTTER'S BAY, 2.30 UNCLE ERNE (ALT), 2.40 FORESTVIEW.

BBC-2

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Races include 1.40 HAYDOCK PARK CHAMPION HURDLE TRIAL, 1.50 MYRTLE, 2.00 SCOTLAND BANK, 2.10 BLYTHPORT GIFF, 2.20 POTTER'S BAY, 2.30 UNCLE ERNE (ALT), 2.40 FORESTVIEW.

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BBC-2

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Catterick

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Races include 1.45 Pease Day, 1.55 Lord Dorset, 1.45 Starburst, 2.15 Rowland Chern, 2.45 Cornish Express, 2.15 Parnham Gate, 2.45 Postlethwaite Flyer.

Colony Stud, 4 Doncaster Millers. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last race.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Races include 1.45 HAYDOCK PARK CHAMPION HURDLE TRIAL, 1.55 MYRTLE, 2.05 SCOTLAND BANK, 2.15 BLYTHPORT GIFF, 2.25 POTTER'S BAY, 2.35 UNCLE ERNE (ALT), 2.45 FORESTVIEW.

BBC-2

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Races include 1.45 HAYDOCK PARK CHAMPION HURDLE TRIAL, 1.55 MYRTLE, 2.05 SCOTLAND BANK, 2.15 BLYTHPORT GIFF, 2.25 POTTER'S BAY, 2.35 UNCLE ERNE (ALT), 2.45 FORESTVIEW.

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Blurred by the first time - CATERICK: 1.15 Flowering River, 1.45 Weaver Gate, 1.45-1.55 The Duke, 1.45-1.55 The Duke.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS PAGE 18

Can Ferguson's... Ginola... No Goza for...

سكيات الادل

RUGBY UNION: THE FIVE NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP

France v England at Parc des Princes

England's will must stifle French élan

Robert Armstrong in Paris on a low-key build-up to a game set to explode today

PERHAPS the lingering fog which took the edge off the strident sounds of the city had induced the philosophical mood that pervaded the England and France training camps on the outskirts of Paris yesterday.

occasion with ruthless efficiency. Neither Moore nor Peter Winterbottom nor Rob Andrew - all tormentors of the French - would settle for less.

with precision down the flanks. It remains to be seen whether England's bushy-tailed half-back Dawson and Grayson can improve on their promising debut in last month's victory over Samoa at the expense of the No. 3 rugby nation in the world.

The experts have their say

Five former coaches give their predictions for the Five Nations



Table with 5 columns (England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, France) and 5 rows (January 20, February 3, February 17, March 2, March 16) showing predicted scores.

Expert views



France are the favourites and they have to lose the championship. But England have a strong squad and should not be written off.

Ireland are the outsiders and will be difficult to beat at home. Scotland will think they have done well if they win their home games.

I just hope the tournament stimulates the public as it is often an anti-climax. Players seem to have one eye on professionalism and another on the southern hemisphere.

Facts & figures

Table showing Number of tries and goals in the last ten seasons for England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and France.

The cash players can expect:

England Basic £24,000 for squad membership, plus £2,000 for each match started. Total for ever-present player (six matches): £36,000. No win bonuses.

Parc des Princes teams

Table listing the starting lineups for France and England for the match at Parc des Princes.

A International: France 15, England 25

Stimpson & Co build up pressure on their seniors

ENGLAND'S selectors must be getting more confused by the minute. No sooner do they find replacements for Rob Andrew and the rest of the old guard following last summer's World Cup than they are confronted with an even fresher crop of young tyms.

that set up the game's only try, the centre Will Greenwood producing an inspired flick pass to send Stimpson over wide out on the left.

Stimpson cut the deficit in the 47th minute with a simple kick from inside the French 22, repeated the treatment four minutes later and then scored his try to give the visitors the lead for the first time.

Ireland v Scotland at Lansdowne Road

Irish have that professional air

Ian Malin tells why the Scots are heading for Dublin with more trepidation than usual

SCOTLAND have not lost to Ireland in the Five Nations Championship for eight years, yet their supporters are heading for Dublin this weekend with all the relish of Fergie visiting her bank manager.

Scots to redeem hopeless causes, as witness his last-minute winning try in Paris last year. He could also kick them to victory in tight games. Today that responsibility falls upon Michael Dods, a talented player but one making his Five Nations debut and playing out of position on the left wing.

Ireland's caution may be justified. But tactics aside, the main reasons that Scotland are approaching the game with such trepidation are their two most recent results. In November they drew 15-15 with Western Samoa but were outscored 2-0 on tries; and a fortnight ago they were beaten 29-17 by the Italians in Rieti. The Scots fielded virtually a full-strength side for a fixture they insisted on reducing to "A" status and Italy made them pay for the insult.

Simon Geoghegan, Jim Staples and the new centre partnership of Jonathan Bell and Kurt McQuilkin are all strong, powerful runners whereas the Scots, Townsend apart, are hardly blessed with elusive try-scoring backs.

got some very experienced forwards, but also a couple of skilful half-backs. Even Gavin Hastings might admit that Ireland, like France against England today, are favourites to end an eight-year home run without a victory in this fixture.

Lansdowne Road teams

Table listing the starting lineups for Ireland and Scotland for the match at Lansdowne Road.

Clairan Fitzgerald, a former captain and coach, said: "There was at the very least a professional approach by the other nations even before the acceptance that players and coaches should be paid."

Mason outshines Gallagher in scrappy victory over Scots

IRELAND A ended a run of three victories by their Scottish counterparts with a comfortable 26-19 win at Donnybrook yesterday.

had already kicked two penalties for Ireland, who quickly hit back after the Scottish score with a push-over try by Paul Wallace.

Hockey

Britain let two-goal lead slip

PAT ROWLEY in Barcelona DRAW with India was probably no more than might have been expected from Great Britain's first match in the Olympic Qualifying tournament at the Polo Club here. But was it a point lost or a point gained?

through illness, Julian Halls, the team's anchor, had to miss the game with back spasms. Everything seemed to be going against them when Soma Singh, replacing Halls at the back, conceded a corner and an intricate Indian drill brought them a fifth-minute goal from Sanjeev Kumar.

tween a long pass by Soma led to quick inter-passing and a quality goal from Rob Thompson.

failed to take two late chances. Canada, Britain's opponents tomorrow, suffered a 5-1 hiding from Holland, a Malaysia's fastest counter-attacks earned them a 2-1 win over Belgium, who lost their centre-forward De Chaffoy with a broken leg.

Sports Betting

Letting the spread take the strain

JULIAN TURNER SPREAD betting is sport's answer to the "spread" society. It can seem confusing at first, because prices are expressed in a completely different way from everyday (fixed odds) betting, but it is in fact all too simple to understand.

94-37 points: you could either bet lower than 34 (known as "selling") or, if you expected a high-score game, "buy" by betting higher than 37.

is happening, so you can take a profit or cut a loss by hedging by phone (and credit account). The spread firms' adverts are listed on Teletext (Channel 4, page 590).

looks like an underestimate, given the Scots' poor away record. Buy Ireland at 8.



Cantona: one year after Selhurst, page 9
To Dublin in trepidation, page 11

Another fine day for Agassi, page 10

SportsGuardian

FRANCE INSISTS THAT THE TIME IS RIGHT TO END ENGLAND'S WINNING RUN



A kick in the Parc... England's goalkeeper Paul Grayson, hoping to punish the French, was crisply accurate in yesterday's practice session. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID ROGERS

When the loser must eat cake

Frank Keating in Paris on the pride and pressures stoking up the heat before today's landmark meeting of Europe's superpowers

THE England XV this afternoon seek to win in Paris for the fifth successive time and extend to eight one of the longest winning streaks in Five Nations memory. It might, therefore, surprise some that France have installed themselves as firm favourites, which is testament to England's somewhat jaded performances in their last four internationals of 1995, which included, of course, defeat by France in the World Cup fixture to decide third place.

That match in South Africa was the last international played by England's stalwart hooker Brian Moore, whose regular and mischievous pre-match goading of the French team added so much to the gaiety of all nations except an infuriated Gallic one.

Moore this afternoon will be up in the commentary box

and perhaps the absence of his spicy verbals from the sharp end of the team's preparation has helped make this week such a curiously and comparatively muted one for England's expectations. Last year Moore's teasing included the taunt that any match against the French was "like playing against 15 Cantonas".

Before the England team flew from Heathrow on Thursday afternoon they put themselves through a grimacingly intent and extended training session; yesterday was for winding down. They are staying in Versailles, in a chateau hotel alongside the former hunting grounds of Louis XIV. After a gentle training hour under a soft, slate sky they went to tread the short grass of Parc des Princes and sniff the empty stadium's atmosphere, which as ever will be raucously red-hot this afternoon.

At the Parc England's new young goalkeeper Paul Grayson practised from all points with a satisfyingly crisp thwack. He unerringly bisected the H. Today will be a daunting occasion for the highly talented young man.

It is a most significant fixture for, with Scotland's visit to Dublin, the day sees the first officially professional Five Nations occasion since rugby's amateur — shall we say amateur — regulations were ditched without ceremony here last autumn. The French have been promised bonuses of up to £25,000 a man should they succeed England as Grand Slam champions in spring; England have settled for a basic match fee throughout the tournament, win or lose, of £2,000 each to be added to their season's retainer of £24,000.

The England captain Will Carling pooh-poohs the idea

of bonus payments only for victory. "Bonuses couldn't possibly increase our will to win," he said, adding that for all the French being perceived as favourites, "they must still be uneasy about the aura of England's four successive Paris victories, even though we no longer have Brian [Moore] to wind them up. Simply, it will be a match of mighty big hits — it is always that against France."

Carling has seemed particularly relaxed and matly buoyant this week, perhaps in the confidence of his place being on the back pages rather than the front. He made his first international appearance in this city, in England's 10-9 defeat in 1988; his fly-half then was Les Cusworth, now one of the England coaches with, inevitably, Rory Underwood on the wing. It is a dozen years since the record try-scorer first played for England in Paris, having succeeded another present England coach, Mike Simen, a fortnight before. There is a rewarding sense of continuity

about recent England teams. "The match atmosphere in Paris is said to scare visiting sides," Underwood said, "but I've always found it can get you up wonderfully. I remember watching Paris games on television when I was at school and being thrilled by the din and general commotion of whistles and brass bands. When I actually ran out to play here in 1984, it was exactly the same. I love it."

Flying with the team on Thursday one was reminded of another anniversary: 40 years ago, almost to the day, an England rugby team became the first to fly to a Paris match. Before, sides had gone by train and ferry. There was a memorable grainy photograph of the pioneer squad sheepishly standing by the step-ladders alongside a tiny BEA twin-propellered aeroplane next to the couple of Nisser butts that then comprised the conditions.

Eric Evans in his first year as captain, Peter Robbins, Sandy Sanders and all, plus a lanky London Society referee who was to be

touch-judge the following afternoon, one Denis Thatcher.

Last year the French team on the eve of the Twickenham fixture travelled first-class under La Manche in the newly opened Eurostar train, tucking napkins into their already straining collars and gorging on a five-course meal and chateau-bottled wines; next day France were trounced. In contrast, for the comparatively short hop by Boeing, England had time only for an economy-class egg sandwich and a slice of cake.

A piece of cake? Yes, omeurs everywhere.

Five Nations preview, page 11

Sinton leads transfer spree in move to Spurs

THE sound of opening and closing cash registers reverberated through the Premiership yesterday as clubs began to enrich their sides for the Twenty-four hours after selling Ilie Dumitrescu to West Ham. Tottenham Hotspur invested the £1.5 million in Andy Sinton, who returns to London from Sheffield Wednesday.

The former England international winger is reunited with the Spurs manager Gerry Francis, who sold him from Queens Park Rangers for £2.5 million.

"Andy is a quality player who will give us new options," said Francis, who bought Ruel Fox to bring pace and incisiveness to the right wing and now hopes Sinton will strengthen the left.

Nigel Clough, another mis-

fit whose career has been in free-fall, also moved yesterday, joining Manchester City from Liverpool for £1.2 million. The forgotten man of the seaside football, who joined Liverpool from Nottingham Forest in 1993, opted to join City's battle for Premiership survival rather than Birmingham City's scramble for promotion from the First Division after more than three hours of talks with City's manager Alan Ball and chairman Francis Lee.

City financed yesterday's deal by off-loading their second-choice goalkeeper Tony Coton to Manchester United. Coton had asked for a transfer in order to play first-team football but now he has agreed to understudy Peter Schmeichel.

The move surprised Ball, who said: "Tony came to see

me and we had a heart to heart. He was unhappy he couldn't get in the first team but he has been a great servant to this club and in trying to help the lad solve his problem the chairman and I decided he would be allowed to leave if a club came in. But I am surprised he has swapped one bench for another."

Ten days after Marc Hotzinger announced he had no intention of joining Everton from Newcastle United, he moved yesterday to Goodison Park in a £700,000 deal. The Swiss international full-back will step straight into Joe Royle's team when he receives a new work permit.

Sunderland yesterday completed the £200,000 signing of Chelsea's Gareth Hall and signed the young Blackburn Rovers goalkeeper Shay Given on loan for a month.

England crumble to another defeat

ENGLAND'S cricketers went from bad to awful in East London yesterday when, after bowling well to dismiss South Africa for only 129, their batsmen replied with a miserable 115 to lose the sixth one-day international by 14 runs and go 5-1 down in the seven-match series.

England, hoping to boost their shattered confidence with the World Cup looming, were undone by the wiles of Paul Adams, who dismissed Graeme Hick (39), Graham Thorpe (0) and Dominic Cork (2) to finish with three for 26, and blind panic that saw Jack Russell and Richard Illingworth needlessly run out.

Darren Gough had been the pick of the bowlers with three for 25 but all of them did well on a slow, low

pitch and the South Africa all-rounder Brian McMillan, with 45 not out, was the only home batsman to master the conditions.

But in bowling out their opponents with more than eight overs to spare England condemned themselves to a 25-minute session before the dinner break: predictably they failed to negotiate it safely.

Craig White touched a Fanie De Villiers delivery to Dave Richardson after making six and in the next over Robin Smith misjudged the low bounce of a ball from Shaun Pollock, jabbing down on it too late and sending it into his stumps. England reached the break at 12 for two and the rot had set in.

Mike Selvey, page 10

To err is not exclusive to referees



David Lacey

REFEREES in Rotherham are refusing to officiate in the local leagues next season unless the council provides dressing-room facilities. At the moment they have to change out of doors.

A similar attitude by Premier League referees towards the constant exposure of their frailties would swiftly lead to a shortfall of men in green.

Barely a week goes by without some unfortunate official being berated from trainer's bench to living room, where television replays make every one an instant expert.

During the FA Cup tie between Derby and Leeds Peter Jones sent off Gary Rowett for bringing down Brian Deane just inside the Derby half. The decision looked harsh and, to emphasise the point, a white line appeared on TV screens measuring out the precise distance from goal at which the offence had occurred.

Mocking referees by providing instant information which will never be available to them is unhealthy. In addition the erosion by Fifa of the referee's powers of discretion is still not fully appreciated.

Last weekend the raised elbow that saw Lee Chapman dismissed by Paul Danson in the player's first match back at Leeds led to much discussion among the pundits but the crucial change introduced by Fifa this season — that intent is no longer an issue except in cases of handball — was largely ignored.

Chapman's insistence that he had no intention of hurting West Ham's Marc Rieper would have been a valid defence last season but not now. Only two years ago the FA decided not to bring a misconduct charge against John Fashanu, whose elbow broke Gary Mabbutt's cheekbone in four places and an eye socket in three. Intent, it was argued, had not been established.

Those players or former

players who have found themselves on the unfunny end of Fashanu's humerus must have taken a wary view of Chapman's red card.

A week ago television revealed that another Wimbledon player, Robbie Earle, was right to protest his innocence — though not in such strong language — after being penalised for hands by Mike Reed when in fact he had headed away a Bolton centre. But in showing such mistakes TV merely proves that human beings will sometimes err, despite Fifa's apparent desire for robo-refs.

Glenn Hoddle even grumbled about the referee's watch after Newcastle United had forced a replay in stoppage time in their third-round FA Cup tie at Stamford Bridge. The Chelsea manager questioned the number of minutes added on and called for independent timekeepers.

Had clocks been stopped whenever the ball went dead in Wednesday's replay at St James' Park, which lasted 2½ hours including the penalty shoot-out, matters would have dragged on beyond midnight.

Hoddle appeared to have overlooked the fact that much of the stoppage time in the original game was due to Mark Hughes turning a late minor knock into the death scene from Camille.

PROFESSIONAL referees? Well, at £325 a game plus expenses, those in the Premier League are practically that now. Making them full-time, far from making them better referees, would surely produce a generation of career-conscious officials worldly-wise in the matter of knowing whom and whom not to send off.

Everyone makes mistakes, in print, at the mike, on screen and on the pitch. Yesterday Gerald Ashby's cautioning of Newcastle's David Ginola, for diving in the Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final at Arsenal, was wiped out after the referee admitted he was wrong.

In yesterday's Daily Mirror Alan Hansen criticised this booking, saying it had been as wrong as Ashby's decision to dismiss Manchester United's Roy Keane at Blackburn for a similar offence which had brought the Irishman a second caution. Keane was certainly unlucky — but the referee that night was not Ashby but David Elleray.

Guardian **COLLINS** Crossword 20,554

A copy of the Collins English Dictionary, will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn. Entries to Guardian Crossword No 20,554, Reference Marketing, Harper Collins Publishing, 77-85 Fulham Palace Road, London, W6 8JB, by first post on Friday. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday January 29.

Name _____
Address _____

COLLINS THESAURUS

3 24's uncle, I was also brought to book (8)
5 Talking point? Without true change, Walesa takes the lot (7,4)
6 See 26
7 Very large semi built to contain males (7)
8 24 character has little room to turn in the planet (9)
12 Treat as slaves but stand the drinks? (5,6)
13 With a cask at home the doctor, for example, can pull a string (6-3)
15 Return of some gypsy girl seen with a telescope (8)
17 US town with house protector — against me? (7)
19 Joint protector: father to produce relation first (7)
20 Black eye for a star (5)
22 Stephan leaves a flower for Redding (4)

Set by Araucaria

Across
1 The science of controlling itches? (6)
4 Decimal system — in the Vice-President's view? (8)
9 Out with a woman? (6)
10 Sensational South American bird! (8)
11 Claque taking tea in decaduous development (6,8)
13 Number, time, and hour briefly spaced out among the wounded (3,7)
14 Injury for your own good? (4)

Down
16 Aristocratic writers? (4)
18 Seeds of fruit little changed by music-makers (5,5)
21 Heavenly show, and not needing the sailors' lungs (8,8)
23 Did he come from Warsaw to be killed by... (8)
24 ... the prince of the village, son of... (5)
25 ... one said to be clothed without delicacy? (8)
26,6 Lamb's attempts at 24's girl, say (6,2,4)

Crossword Solution 20,554

She may be upfront and loud-mouthed, but she is fancy with her footwork, both in the Commons and during this interview. Most striking of all is her self-certitude. She talks in the crisp, sing-song tones of someone who is so sure they are right, it wears them to spell out why.

Megan Tresidder on Ann Widdecombe

the height of...
Chamber to Jo...
ground him. By...
discreet. Pre...
acted it most...
Fal...
YC...

صحة من الرجل

السنة الأولى

Saturday January 20
Sunday January 21
1996
Page 13

The Guardian Outlook

A three-day serialisation of a major new book by RUSSELL DAVIES

At the height of his power, Robert Maxwell, the corrupt business tycoon, had the ear of political leaders from Yeltsin to Shamir to John Major. He claimed to be influencing world events while his media empire was crumbling around him. By 1991, the time of his death at sea, things were going badly wrong. He had become increasingly indiscreet. Practically anybody known to Maxwell had a reason for wishing him dead. The question is, who wanted it most? Today and next Monday and Tuesday we present new evidence on his life and death

The Maxwell story

Fall of a tycoon

THE UNCLOTHED corpse of Robert Maxwell is adrift in the Atlantic. Borne on a gentle swell, he lies face-up to the dawning sky. The waters lap at the black dye of his hair. It is hard not to think of him as a giant baby, for if there is a motto for this scene, it is to be found in the book of Job, where it is written: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away". How much help he received in the case of Robert Maxwell is still a vexing question.

The year of 1991 had been one of most turbulent of the century. Kuwait had been liberated on the last day of February. The World Economic Forum in Davos had taken place at the height of the Gulf war. The situation within the USSR belied the name of Union, as Lithuania and Latvia struggled to be free. Boris Yeltsin had called for President Gorbachev's resignation. In almost every headline event, Maxwell had some direct and personal interest. In late June, as tension within Yugoslavia grew, Maxwell, pursuing a new policy of advertising his political clout, published a Mirror Group Newspapers press release stating that, "The President of Croatia, Dr Franjo Tudjman, has sought help of Publisher Robert Maxwell to publish a message seeking international support for Croatia's declaration of independence."

In April, Yitzhak Shamir, with whom Maxwell had personally interceded, met Soviet Prime Minister Pavlov in London, expressing the hope that full diplomatic relations between their countries could soon be restored. The following day, Maxwell announced the flotation of almost half the Mirror Group empire. Only a week later came the issue of documents detailing the proposed sale of Pergamon Press, Maxwell's creation. Nobody who knew Maxwell's commercial history could have taken this for an encouraging signal.

Maxwell was in a most strange situation. The wheels were falling off the chariot of his ambition, yet it was parked already at the centre of world politics. His discussions had helped preserve the democratic momentum in Russia. A Soviet hard-line coup unseated President Mikhail Gorbachev in August. Felix Sviridov, head of Maxwell Communication Corporation in Moscow, received instructions from Maxwell to contact "a number of leading personalities in the Soviet Union", to ask what was needed by way of international help. "Bob Maxwell managed to organise telephone conversations between Mr Yeltsin on the one side and a number of Western leaders on the other side." Mitromed, Kohl and James Baker III were among those who responded.

In former days, Maxwell himself would have kept quiet about all this. But what had once been "back-door" diplomacy on his part was now placed by Maxwell on the front porch. His large Mirror articles, "Why the hard men failed", left readers in no doubt that he himself had succeeded, in telephonic concert with Boris Yeltsin. "I received an urgent message from him, shortly before he was called by John Major.

Yeltsin wanted me to alert the Prime Minister and the White House to the imminent danger he was in, which I did... During yesterday and Tuesday," Maxwell continued, "in a series of phone calls from the Soviet Union, and especially from Mr Yeltsin's office and from Alexander Yakovlev, formerly Mr Gorbachev's closest adviser and friend, all these events were unfolded to me."

But it was the active part of Maxwell's programme that must have caused dismay, especially in the White House. "I, in turn," he boasted, "passed details to General Brent Scowcroft, President Bush's National Security Adviser, and to Downing Street." Scowcroft will not have been pleased to see this.

The same issue of the Mirror carried an aggrandising squib about the Downing Street contact. "Prime Minister John Major discussed the failed Soviet coup with Mirror Publisher Robert Maxwell for 10 minutes yesterday. A grateful Mr Major thanked Mr Maxwell for passing 'new important information'." Not much more than two months later, Major was confirming the truth of this, as part of his obituary tribute to Maxwell. This had indeed been the last service Maxwell performed directly for the United Kingdom.

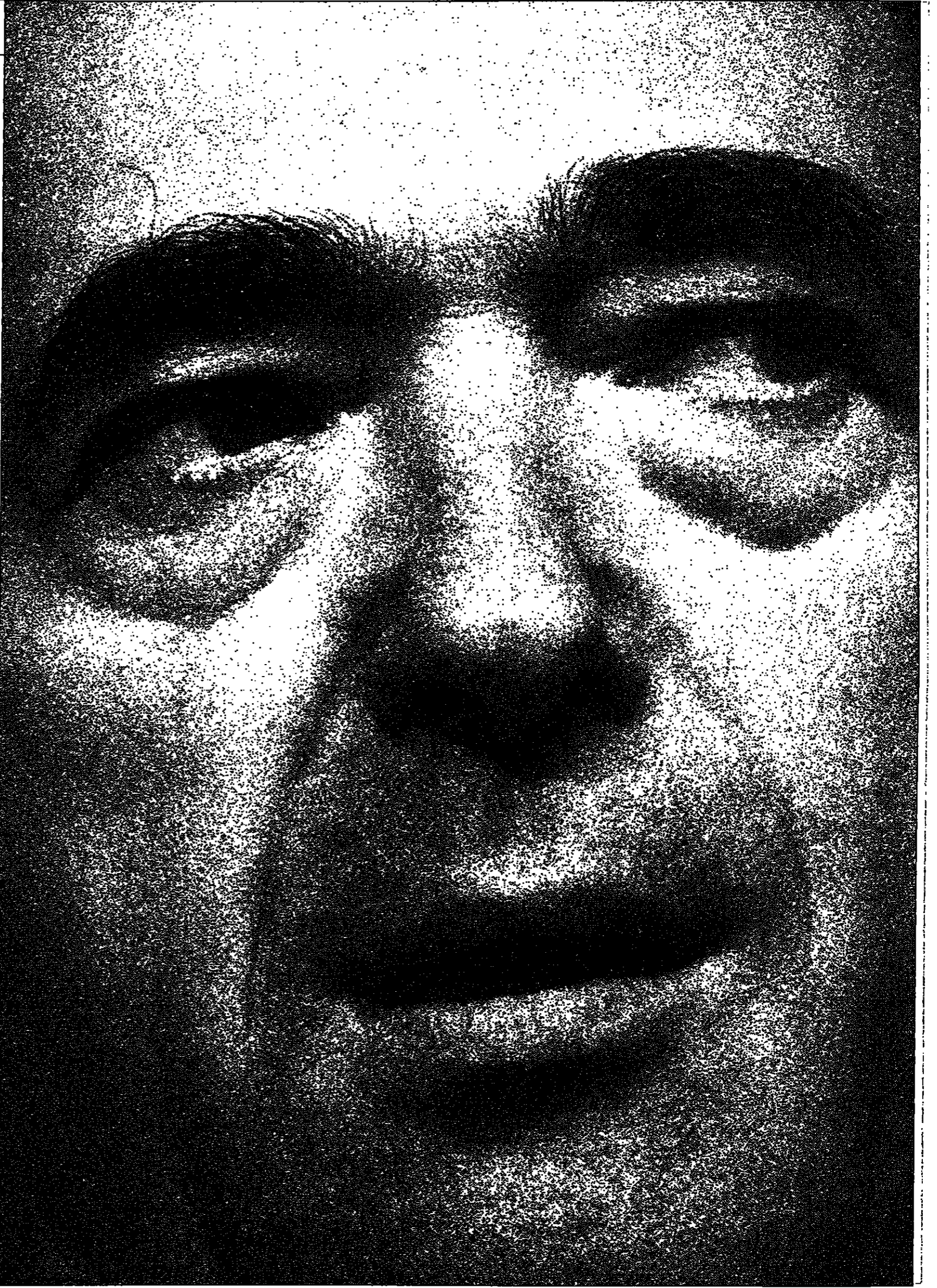
In the last weeks of Robert Maxwell's life, many filaments of his diplomatic web were being suddenly pulled together. Just 12 days before Maxwell's disappearance, the Israeli embassy in Moscow reopened, after nearly 25 years. At the end of October, the Madrid Conference began, and Israelis faced Palestinians, angrily, across a table. The plane that had brought Yitzhak Shamir to Madrid was Maxwell's Gulfstream.

AS political satisfactions deepened, Maxwell's commercial embarrassments multiplied. A journalistically thorough investigation into his finances and methods of management had been undertaken by the BBC's Panorama programme, which broadcast on Monday, September 23. Writs against the BBC, targeting chiefly its allegation that Maxwell had set up his bingo game to cheat his Mirror readers, satisfactorily postponed consideration of any material relating to pension funds.

All his lives were becoming public and high-level officers were leaving his organisation. His deputy chairman at Maxwell Communications, Jean-Pierre Anselmi, resigned and the president of Macmillan also went.

One of the last of his international contacts to meet Maxwell in a purely social way was his old friend the Russian ambassador Leonid Zamyatin. It was, Zamyatin believes, "some 13 or 15 days before he flew to Gibraltar". Their conversation was pleasant, friendly. Maxwell said it was his dream to merge the Macmillan publishing empire with that of McGraw-Hill, and he "had now bought all the appropriate companies". His ambition at that moment seemed centred on America. But he would never see America again.

The final voyage, pages 14-15



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A STAMP



The MALT



The MACALLAN

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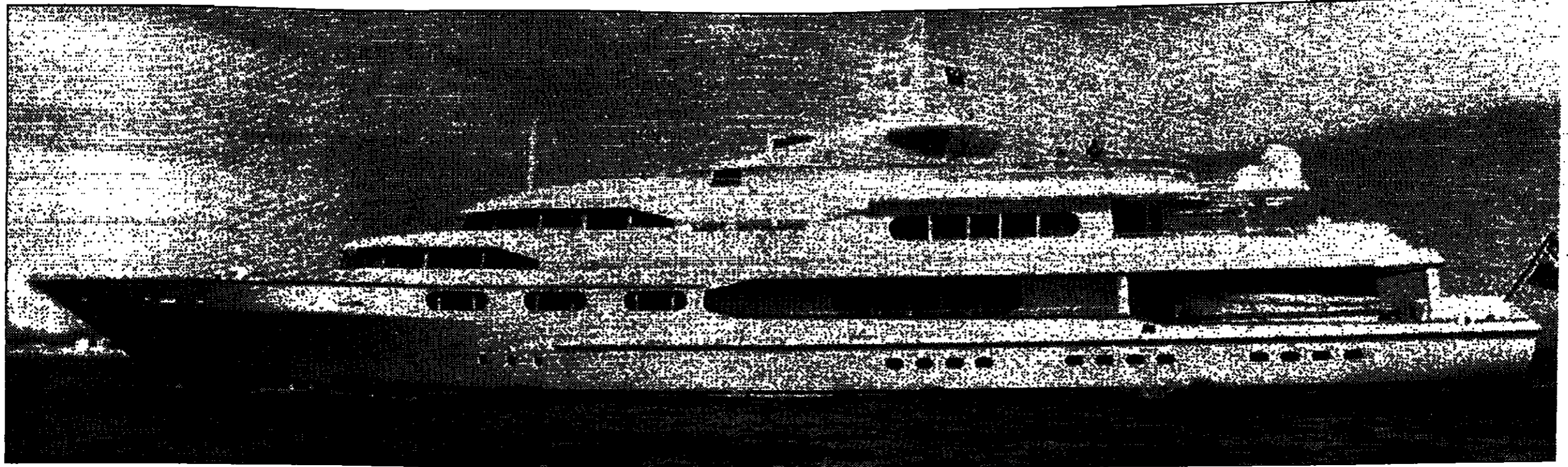
CRYSTAL CLEAR WATERS FROM

NATURAL BORE HOLES FOR TRANS-

FORMATION INTO THE NECTAR

THAT IS The MALT

The last voyage



Floating embassy... Maxwell's luxury cruise ship (above) was used to entertain heads of state. Maxwell takes the sun on board the Lady Ghislaine (left) during the fateful voyage. Three of the Ghislaine crew in Tenerife (in white shirts) with Spanish plain clothes policemen (right). Captain Gus Rankin (far right) and the crew were hired in New York.



The mystery over Maxwell's death remains. Much of the evidence points to suicide or accident. But what about the strange bruising and torn arm muscles, the satellite pictures of another boat alongside his yacht? For the first time Captain Angus Rankin talks in depth about the final hours. It is clear that murder cannot be ruled out

ON OCTOBER 30, 1991, the Lady Ghislaine was moored at Gibraltar, waiting to sail to New York, where most of the crew had been taken on just a few months earlier. The captain, Angus J Rankin, had himself joined the vessel only in May. Although he is a resident of Pocahontas, Arkansas, Captain Rankin's accent betrays a British origin. He is a burly and unsmiling man; and though it is no part of an officer's duty to conform to a stereotype of clean-cut eagerness, something about Rankin, as seen in interview footage, tends rather strikingly the other way. This also was the initial reaction of Dr Elisabeth Maxwell, who lives in her book *A Mind Of One's Own*, how he did not give "the spruce naval appearance of previous captains. Some of the crew gave me the same impression. The boat did not seem quite 'ship-shape' to me." Nor did she care for Rankin's manner. "The captain did not know me, yet he immediately adopted a familiar way of talking about Bob, which I did not like at all because it didn't ring true. Familiar as I was with Bob's loathing for intimate conversation."

Considering that 11 crew members were on board the Lady Ghislaine to conduct Maxwell's last voyage, remarkably little has heard of their side of the story. Once permitted by the Spanish authorities to leave their last port of call, they dispersed with impressive speed and have not been heard from since. Only Gus Rankin has remained contactable, and his version of events now emerges for the first time.

Rankin says he was disinclined to believe it. "My first reaction was to call one of the secretaries to find out if this was for real, which I did." Early next day, Rankin called Maxwell again and received his confirmation "that he would like to go with us out to Madeira. He was trying to get rid of a cold that he'd had for quite some time." Maxwell arrived on time, and apparently in a good mood. "When he arrived on the boat he just brought his normal stuff and quite a lot of papers." The Lady Ghislaine left Gibraltar "within an hour or so". It was a two-day trip to Madeira. If a desperate and suicidal Maxwell was on board, he had his chances to get it all over with on the way. Instead, he emerged at Funchal, Madeira, remarkably like his normal self. "Somehow," Rankin says, "the press knew that we were arriving with him before we arrived." It would be interesting to know how this happened. At all events, photographs were taken — the last of Maxwell alive.

The most apocalyptic desire Maxwell expressed that day, however, was to go swimming. By permission of the harbour master, Rankin took the Lady Ghislaine out to an appropriately uninhabited island called Desertas, where Maxwell did indeed swim for "about 10 minutes", in Rankin's recollection; but it was too cold. They returned to Madeira where, that evening, a crew member took Maxwell ashore. He visited the casino, with \$3,000 in hand. The brevity of his stay suggests limited enjoyment.

Rankin says that he and the crew had been expecting Maxwell to return to London the following morning; but instead, he said that he'd like to stay a couple of extra days and go somewhere else, and we discussed the options, which is why we went to Tenerife. This was another overnight trip. The next day, Maxwell again went swimming. Before they all returned to Santa Cruz, he announced that he was leaving the following morning, and asked, "if it would be possible that night if we could take the boat out, because he slept better on the boat at sea if it was calm, rather than just sitting in port". Maxwell said that in the morning he would release the crew to sail on to Bermuda and New York. He would eat ashore that night.

As he did so, the Anglo-Israel Association was convening in London, under the impression that it was to be addressed by Robert Maxwell. In the event, his son Ian read the speech, which had been worked out between them over Maxwell's satellite telephone. "Of all nights that my father would have wished to have been present, this, I think, would be it."

Maxwell, meanwhile, returned to the boat "about a quarter to 10, 10 o'clock... Our course was set to go round the north end of Gran Canaria, staying about five miles offshore all the way around, and end up in Los Cristianos after nine o'clock the following day." Rankin himself soon went off watch. "At midnight I turned it over to the mate and they followed the course."

At the time he went to bed, Maxwell had been wearing a nightshirt. (The garment was later found on the floor of his state room.) He received a late telephone call from his son, who let him know how the Anglo-Israel speech had gone. It is known that a further call came in, from Rabbi Vogel, one of a number of Lubavitcher rabbis who were agitating for sacred Jewish texts to be exported from Russia. Maxwell's last two communications with the outside world, therefore,

dealt intimately with the Jewish past he had for so long denied.

Gus Rankin came back on watch at 8am. He estimates the boat was 25 miles from Los Cristianos at that point. They anchored off the town about 9.45am "and then waited for Mr Maxwell to appear". When a phone call came in about 10.20am, Rankin advised that Maxwell was still in his cabin. The caller didn't feel he needed to be disturbed. Then a more urgent call came in at 11am. Rankin gave the same reply, but this time it was imperative that Maxwell be roused. "That's when we first got the inkling that he wasn't there."

Suspecting a medical problem, he says, Rankin went "down through the office to try to get entry through the bathroom that adjoined his [bedroom] and that was locked". He took with him the ship's chef, who was an instructor in resuscitation techniques. "We then went around to the aft entrance, a sliding door, which had been tried to get a response." There was none. The door was locked, so Rankin used his pass key, "... expecting now to see somebody either passed out on the bed or on the deck or something. And nobody inside — rather strange feeling!" The bed had been slept in, and clothes were scattered about.

Rankin now organised a thorough search of the vessel. While these bizarre and repeated manoeuvres were underway, no notification of a man overboard had yet been made. At one point, a black-haired figure was spotted swimming near the beach; looking through binoculars, Rankin couldn't swear it was not Maxwell. "We put a boat over the side to go over and have a look and see if it was him; and just before the boat got there, the man walked out on to the beach and one could tell it was Maxwell." The man was rowing the boat. Having failed to contact the local radio station ashore, Rankin instructed him to "go in and speak to the harbour authorities and tell them what we suspected, that he had gone missing during the night".

In the meantime, Rankin says, he and the crew fell to sorting out who had seen or spoken to Maxwell last. It was then that it emerged that, at 4.25am, the second engineer had received a request from Maxwell for the air-conditioning to be turned up. This was not a telephonic request: both men had been taking the air towards the stern of the vessel, and had spoken face to face. Half an hour later, Maxwell allegedly asked for the cooling system to be turned down again. No later message from him is reported.

Eventually the Lady Ghislaine "put out an SOS through the satellite-communication system". More than an hour had passed between the discovery of the empty state room and the successful transmission of a message to the outside world. Rankin went in and spoke to the port captain at

Los Cristianos, and an effort was made to estimate where the vessel had been at 5am, which was the latest stated time at which Maxwell had been alive. A message went out to ships in the vicinity. In an effort to inform the family, Rankin also called Maxwell's offices in London. "By chance I spoke with Brian Hull, who was one of the airplane captains; and his suggestion was that the person to speak to would be Kevin Maxwell." He called Kevin, who asked him to call again in 10 minutes; when he did, Kevin and Ian were together to receive the news.

Rankin presumes that someone intercepting the sat-comm message had passed it on to the media, because calls now started to come in from reporters. The first such call, he believes originated in New York. By this point, the police had arrived to inspect Maxwell's stateroom. They taped up a safe they found there, to which Rankin had no key. Later, when Betty Maxwell arrived, she first insisted on a private interview with Rankin, during which he gave it as his belief that her husband had committed suicide. This theory she rejected. In Maxwell's cabin, she went straight to the hiding-place of the key, and opened the safe. It was empty. Dr Maxwell's inspection of the room should have been taken as a minor stage in its examination for forensic purposes. Instead, amazingly, it was taken by the

local police as the signal for the whole investigation of the site to be wound up. As Rankin has it: "The room was left intact until Mrs Maxwell was there, spoke to the police, did whatever there was — and at that point, the police gave permission for the room to be cleaned up." Rather icily, Rankin re-emphasises, "The police gave that permission."

IN VIEW of Maxwell's £20 million personal insurance policy, Lloyd's of London called in Dr Iain West, a pathologist at Guy's Hospital, to give an independent opinion on the causes of death. Dr West did not examine the body until it had arrived in a semi-embalmed condition, in Israel for burial. "I gather," says Dr West, "that the boat was handed over to the relatives very quickly... I think the deck was washed down. We lost a crime... a potential crime scene." The slip of the tongue is revealing of doubts. In spite of the fact that Dr West has tended all along to favour — very narrowly — the theory of suicide, it is clear he wishes that all the potential evidences of crime had been preserved for assessment.

The insurance report is much the most thorough investigation made of an incident in which Scotland Yard might have been expected to have taken a more lively interest. It is believed, for example, that

not until Dr West entered the case were sea-water samples collected, against which to check whatever liquid had been ingested or absorbed by Maxwell's body. (Such findings may often conclusively indicate drowning as the cause of death, though in this case they did not.) On the other hand, there were aspects of life aboard the Lady Ghislaine which were never examined by anybody. Maxwell's aide, Nicholas Davies has stated, for example, that Maxwell had taken aboard a helicopter and flown to the airport at Las Palmas. It was formally identified later that evening by Dr Betty Maxwell and her eldest son, Philip.

The deck was washed. We lost a potential crime scene

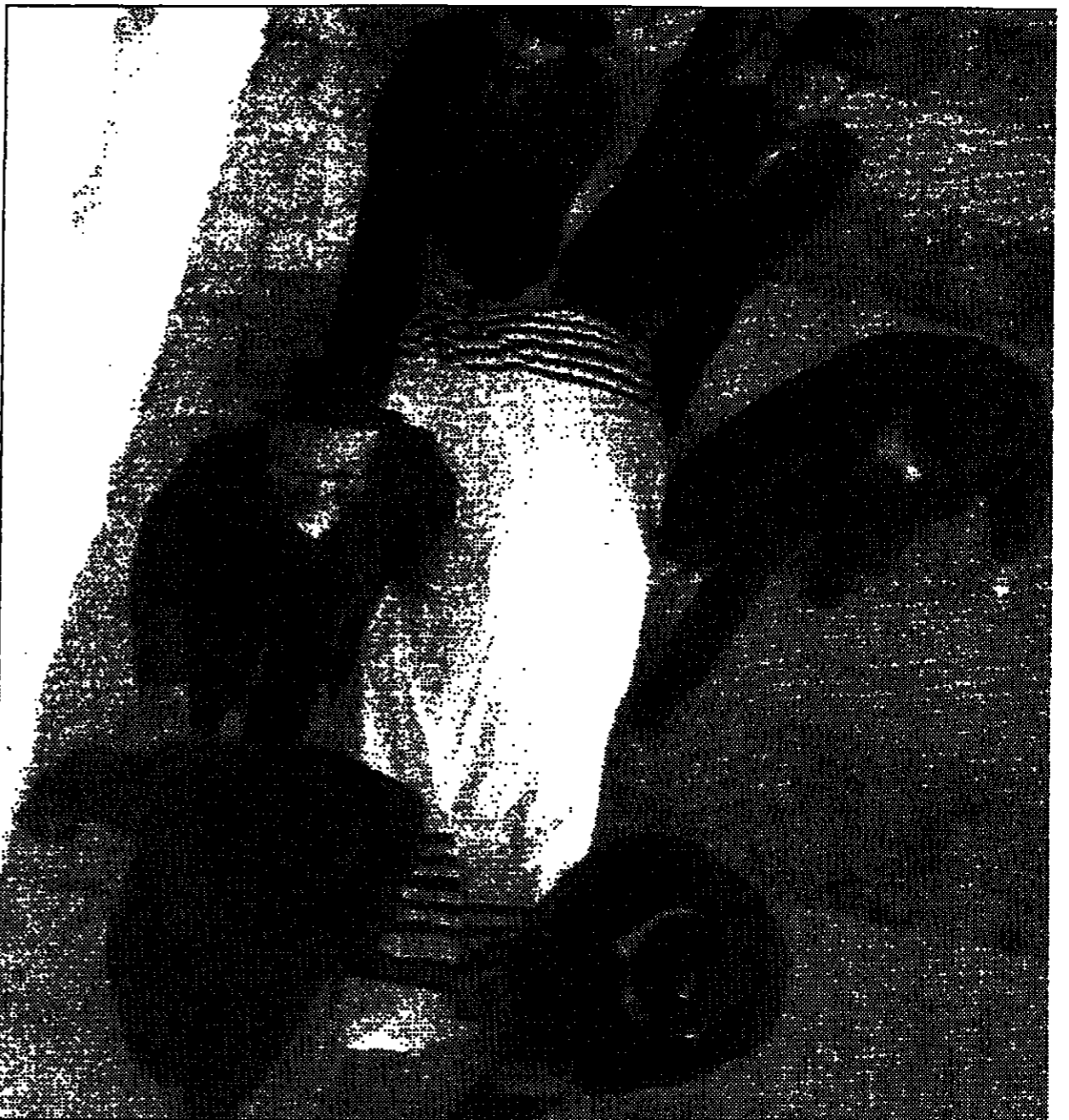
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صلى الله عليه وسلم

The body of Robert Maxwell is carried to the graveside on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem (below right). Elizabeth Maxwell and her daughters Isabel and Ghislaine (below) share their grief during the funeral. Pathologist Ian West (right).



Spanish airmen guard the helicopter that brought the body of Maxwell to the Gando Air Base on Grand Canary Island (left).



Who wanted him dead?

ALMOST everyone had some reason to wish him out of the way. As Rupert Allason MP, also known as the writer Nigel West, has it: "The number of people who would have been willing to undertake that particular exercise must be able to form a queue right round the entire block." They included such candidates as the Iranians, whose erstwhile leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, Maxwell had insulted in a speech to the headquarters staff of the UK Land Forces of the British Army. "Let us deal with the barbarian in his own coin, the only coin that so diseased and underdeveloped a mind can understand, the coin of a price on his head." He had nominated \$10 million.

In New York, more recently, some of the mob-run trade unions had taken less than kindly to Maxwell's "rationalisation" of the Daily News workforce. "A senior mob person" was reported as saying: "If you go on acting like this, you're going to end up in the East River with your throat cut."

The international political community had particular reasons to be alarmed by Maxwell's recent activities. Many nations held information on him, but only recently had the evidence begun to be drawn together — notably by Maxwell himself. Seymour Hersh's arms-dealing allegations, in which were newly in the public domain. Yitzhak Shamir had rebutted those parts or the story that implicated him, although Maxwell's swaggering in the interview he gave Playboy shortly before his death again suggested close links between the two men. Maxwell had claimed that his policy and Shamir's were identical, that he had represented Shamir in talks with James Baker, that he had been instrumental in cooling the Israeli response to Iraqi missile attacks. How much more of Israel's private business was he prepared to reveal? His wife's agent, Hersh and his publisher, and Allason and Galloway, who had raised questions in Parliament on the subject, would be defended: dangerous witnesses would be brought to court. But the death of the litigant would close the cases.

There were yet more possibilities. In the conventional business world, there are not many creditors who feel so strongly about unpaid debts that only the death of the debtor will give satisfaction; but in his money-laundering activities, Maxwell was

But to do that, one had to keep up with Maxwell's erratic and often improvised movements. It was the British themselves who were now tracking him most assiduously. Investigative reporters for the Financial Times revealed on June 15, 1992 that, at the time of Maxwell's death, a full intelligence report was prepared for the Joint Intelligence Committee. It is clear that thorough records had been kept on his movements. But these had now been augmented by a variety of electronic surveillances made necessary — and possible — by the latest developments in communications technology.

It fell to Mr Robin Robison, a former administrative officer for the JIC, to reveal in the same report that Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), the Cheltenham intelligence centre, was keeping a close watch on Maxwell in 1989, two years before his death. Mr Robison, who had been spurred to make these disclosures by his Quaker principles, said: "The signal (signals intelligence) I saw in the autumn of 1989 included intelligence data on Robert Maxwell taken from telephone conversations and faxes intercepted in Israel and the Mediterranean, probably from his yacht, the Lady Ghislaine." Mr Robison recalled that the information had been variously distributed, according to content, among the offices of the Prime Minister, cabinet ministers, and officials he identified as representing the Bank of England.

In late 1989, the most politically active and exciting phase in Maxwell's career had only just begun, with the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is inconceivable that GCHQ's surveillance can have relaxed at this point: it will have intensified, not only because Maxwell's activities were becoming intrinsically more interesting month by month, but because the surveillance methods themselves were becoming more formidable. Where Maxwell himself was stuffing his employees' telephones with clumsy and discoverable bugs, the eavesdroppers on his own affairs were able to aim lasers at window panes, and read speech from the vibrations of the glass. Among the bodies licensed by the Interception of Communications Act of 1985 to authorise phone-tapping had been the Department of Trade and Industry — the enemy who had once judged Maxwell unfit to exercise stewardship of a public company.

First reports of the government listening-posts' involvement were amplified by the Guardian, who reported that communications from the Maxwell yacht — were intercepted by GCHQ, with the help of British submarines, after a tip-off from the CIA in the late Eighties that he was suspected of being involved in arms deals. His conversations were sent by low frequency transmission to GCHQ's outpost at Edzell on Tayside, Scotland. "This information came evidently from a different source, since it was presented as 'corroboration' of Robison's disclosures. Such evidence of collusion between the CIA and the British intelligence services may have been the beginning of the end for Maxwell, certainly in a commercial sense.

In a way it is surprising that his credit, being busily withdrawn at the time of his death, was allowed to endure so long. Maxwell was embarrassing everybody.



Ayatollah Khomeini... Maxwell insulted him

Continued from opposite page have fallen overboard accidentally; but the sea was not rough, there were no abrupt changes of course, and "one would have to do something quite active to fall over". The third option, says Dr West, is suicide: "And clearly the problems that he had at that time could cause a person to kill themselves."

THE fourth option is murder. "In order to demonstrate that, at least from a pathology point of view, a person has got to have injuries which are suggestive, or even characteristic, of an assault. Now, whilst some of the injuries could have occurred during an assault, I could see nothing which indicated there had been an assault." He then mentioned non-controversial instances would later emerge as an area of disagreement between Dr West and his Israeli colleagues. Unfortunately, the possibility of violence involved the very category of evidence most elusive, and most difficult to obtain, and indeed the contemporaneous efforts of the police. "I don't think the Spanish police investigation was particularly thorough, so a lot of the evidence which could have assisted in saying whether we were dealing with a suicide or a homicide wasn't gathered." West was therefore left in the position of being unable to rule out the murder theory. "We got no positive evidence of homicide so it remains a possibility, one which one simply can't exclude."

As for the manner of Maxwell's entry into the water, the most indicative evidence found by West here was "a tear of a fairly large muscle in the back of the shoulder blade, not caused by impact but caused by violent stretching of that muscle". This damage is consistent with Maxwell's "holding on to something and his body suddenly dropping so that the shoulder takes all his weight, even for a relatively short time. He wasn't particularly fit, so that the muscle wouldn't be able to cope with this sudden violent wrenching; it would simply split." Since Maxwell "was clearly alive when the muscles received the damage", this injury suggests that Maxwell clung briefly to some projecting part of the vessel, such as the rail, but was unable to hold on. So it is conceivable that Maxwell's entry into the sea was voluntary and gradual, until the moment when he dropped and was wrenched away into the wake of the Lady Ghislaine. To cause the tears, Maxwell would have needed to be hanging on by his left hand; he was indeed left-handed.

At the same time, it does not seem particularly likely that a man who swam well, and to whom swimming was a pleasure, would have chosen such an anti-instinctive way to die. Neither does Maxwell appear to have made any preparations for the moment of his depar-

ture. Suicides, who are otherwise sane, commonly nerve themselves up with a large intake of alcohol, but Maxwell's organs gave no evidence of any such ingestion. Betty Maxwell re-emphasised at her sons' trial her astonishment at the lack of any final note or message. It must have been a dark night of the soul indeed if Maxwell unceremoniously walked out on deck, locked his door, and dropped first the key, and then his life, into the ocean.

From the point of view of an assassin, it was necessary only to get Maxwell into the water. He would soon be left far behind: a 22-stone man, alone in a cold sea at night, Maxwell would not go quietly, so it would be necessary to hit him first: an injury noted in the area of the right ear — with bruising severe enough to survive the embalming process — went unexplained, as did a curious bruise on the shoulder. As Dr West admits, "I can't explain the patterned injury on the back of the shoulder, this little, relatively superficial bruise which has left a pattern of some sort of fabric on the surface of the skin." But if Maxwell was assaulted within his stateroom, there were a good many fabric-covered surfaces against which he could have fallen heavily enough to sustain an impact bruise of this kind.

It is imaginable that a Maxwell thus assaulted could have recovered sufficiently to resist being bundled into the sea, and returned to consciousness by the cold slap of water, had one more hope. His shoulder injury would have made it impossible to swim, and besides, there was nowhere to swim to in the dark; but if the cold float for long enough on the "flat calm" waters, day would break and he might be spotted. So he lay on his back in the water and waited for sunrise. The combination of agony and fear a man in that position would suffer is uncomfortable to imagine.

This was not a northern sea, but the month was November, and after just 10 minutes of swimming on a recent day, the water had been judged too cold. So it was while the floating Maxwell waited that hypothermia overcame him. The posture in which his body was found, face-up to the sky — most unusual in a person supposedly drowned — may well have been the one in which he died. Since the classic symptoms neither of drowning nor of disease-induced heart failure were found, the probability is strong that Maxwell died of reduction in body temperature — effectively, of exposure. Buoyant with body-fat, he continued to float. Above all, his outspread posture in the water indicates that, far from seeking death, he was doing the only thing he could to survive.

Motives for a face-saving homicide are embarrassingly abundant. The practicalities of the matter are not necessarily complex either. Three schemes suggest themselves for getting the victim into the sea. A person or persons unknown on the vessel could have done it; strangers could have boarded the boat and carried out the operation without the crew's knowledge; or the whole event could have taken place by arrangement, with the crew turning a blind eye. Captain Rankin dismisses the idea of a boarding party at sea — even one with the kind of training our own Special Boat Service receives. "Without being detected? I would say not possible, because even if there isn't somebody on the aft deck, we do have other equipment for detecting other boats... The instructions to the crew were: any vessel that comes within five miles of this boat I am to be called — I, the captain, am to be called. Nobody called me." Rankin also dismisses the persistent rumour that there exists a satellite photograph showing another boat alongside the Lady Ghislaine.

"That's the first I've ever heard about a satellite photograph — and why would somebody be taking a satellite photograph of the boat? Does that mean they're taking satellite photographs of all boats as time goes on? I don't know." As Rankin is aware, the presence of Maxwell on board his vessel answers these questions in advance.

The British attitude to these events has been strangely passive. Not so the French. Paris-Match, having received from Israel the 80-minute video of the second, four-hour autopsy — evidently from a source who felt the proceedings called for a third opinion, and a non-British one — made it the subject of a large report in their edition of January 9, 1992. The conviction the magazine reached, in consultation with experts of its own who saw the tape (but nothing but the tape), was that Maxwell had been attacked before death, and possibly violently beaten. The nose and one ear showed signs of impact and on the body were found several haematomas — swellings containing blood — which are the body's common response to heavy blows. Professor Louis Roche, a former president of the International Academy of Forensic Medicine, drew attention to three such haematomas. "They are not very serious in themselves," he commented, "but they prove that there was trauma" before death.

DEFENDING their conclusions in the following week's issue, Paris-Match stated that they had consulted Dr Birtolon Levy, the Hungarian-born pathologist who had taken part in the Tel Aviv post-mortem. He had told them somewhat emphatically that, "It wasn't the Holy Ghost who did what was done to Maxwell." According to a "reliable but confiden-

tial source", Paris-Match added, Dr Levy had expressed himself more forcefully in the immediate aftermath of the examination. "What is certain," he was reported as saying "is that, if they hadn't hit him, Maxwell would still be alive today."

This controversy was revived at the London trial of Ian and Kevin Maxwell. Dr Jehuda Hiss, director of the Forensic Institute in Tel Aviv and another of the team, pointed out in court that, if Maxwell had jumped voluntarily into the sea, "obviously neither the lacerations nor the haematomas would have been present". Even if he had suddenly changed his mind and tried to cling on to the vessel, those particular injuries remained hard to account for. "For these reasons," Dr Hiss concluded, "it is my opinion that it is unlikely the deceased committed suicide. It is more likely that he fell involuntarily into the sea either as a result of accident or homicide."

On the same day, a statement from Dr James Ward, a Lecturer in Physiology at Guy's and St Thomas's hospitals, was read into the proceedings, raising the possibility that Maxwell had suffered "micturition syncope", a condition which causes men, in particular, to faint while urinating. Maxwell was in the habit of relieving himself over the side of the boat at night (and, if his employees are to be believed, over the side of the Mirror building during the day). But such a faint would seem to be subject to the same drawbacks as those cited by Dr

West as making a heart attack an unlikely cause: "I don't think that he would have dropped from disease and then fallen into the water, he would have ended up on the deck, and I don't think once he's on the deck he could simply roll into the sea." Dr West, who had visited the yacht, had gone further: Maxwell would have needed to do "something quite active", he said, in order to fall over the side. And, in the unlikely event that Maxwell did faint and then toppled over the rail, his impact and muscle injuries are still to be accounted for. All in all, murder remains the one explanation which no medical expert is able to set aside.

RUSSELL DAVIES is a distinguished freelance writer and broadcaster. He has presented more than 60 editions of What The Papers Say. He never worked for Robert Maxwell.



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Some unions didn't like 'rationalisation' dealing with a new generation of post-Communist managers, practicing a capitalism that took little account of traditional business ethics, and still had access to Cold War methods of enforcement. Maxwell's empire was a shambles of high-interest obligations: if a debt had been called in, and it was discovered that Maxwell had "adopted" the funds and committed them elsewhere in his empire, some old friends might have turned against him, definitively.

Moral mantras in our schools

THE POLITICAL correctness of Dr Tait is far more dangerous than that of the teachers who teach about race, gender and class to their children. He sings his mantras that government ministers wish to hear. He is not concerned with distinguishing right from wrong. If he were politically more sincere than correct, he would know that raising race, gender and class issues does not detract from morality and its teaching. It is because it is immoral to practise racism, to downgrade and harass women, or to cut back on the welfare state, that teachers got involved with the struggles of race, gender and class.

There must be many reasons why some children are impervious to a moral code of conduct. I can suggest two which Dr Tait might like to think about. One is the crass and selfish individualistic materialism that was symbolised by that great British heroine, Margaret Thatcher, who said that society did not exist, and the second is the mind-boggling arrogance of the pundits of the Western and Eurocentric tradition who insist that they have little to learn from ancient non-European cultures.

If they showed a little humility they may find out the skills by which some of those in authority in non-European cultures are able to maintain a coherent and ethical code of conduct among their young.

Burjor Avari,
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Multicultural Education,
Manchester Metropolitan University.

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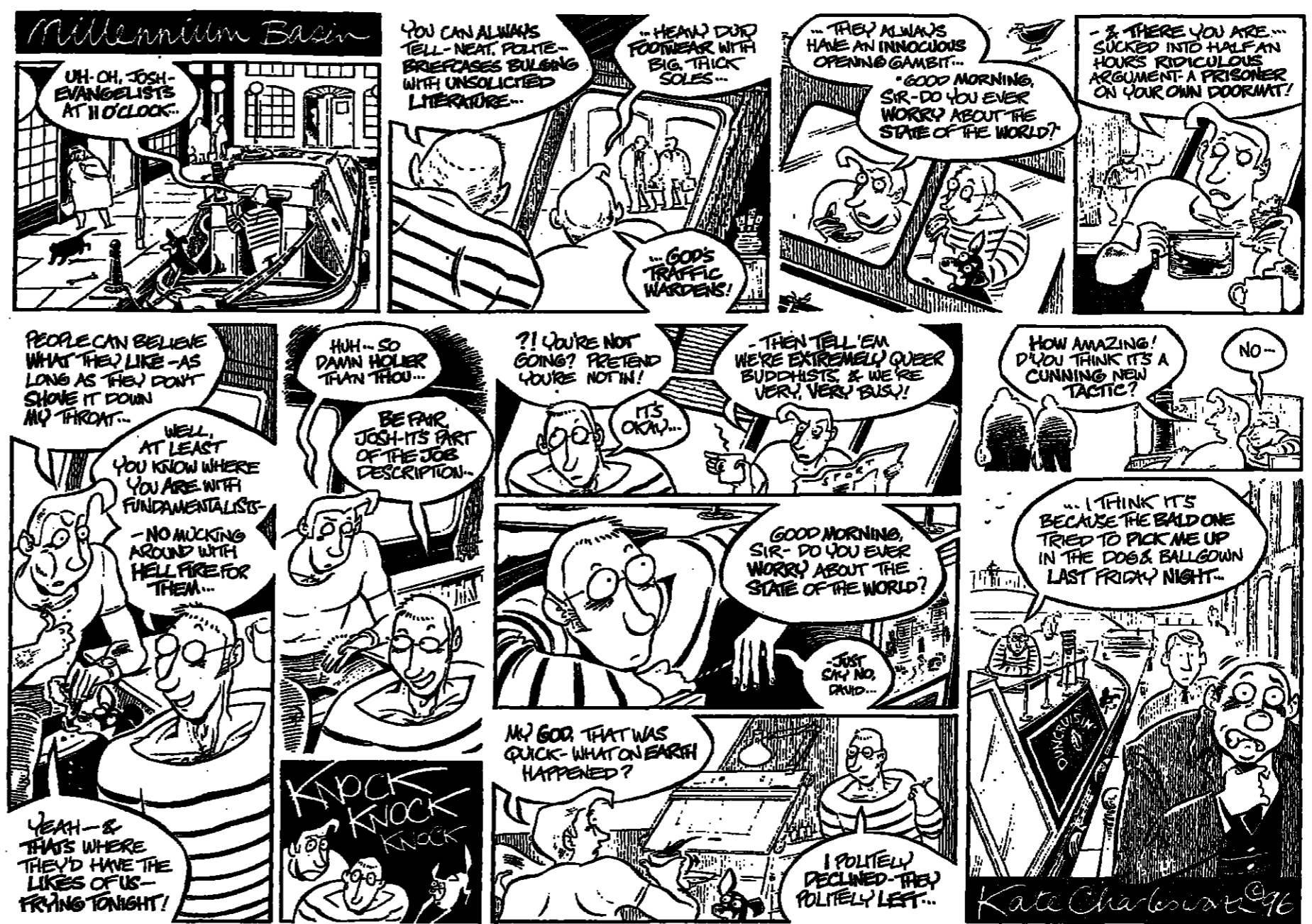
Yet all too often at occasions such as this week's major SCAA conference, the main platform speakers remain silent on the implications of racial and social injustice for moral education, even when— or especially when—they are questioned on this topic by members of the audience.

On political and social issues which are controversial, teachers need and deserve imaginative, intelligent and inspiring leadership from national bodies such as SCAA. The new proposed forum on values in education is certainly to be welcomed. However, if it were to be timorous or evasive on issues of justice in wider society, it would be widely and justifiably held in contempt.

Robin Richardson,
Director,
The Runnymede Trust,
11 Princeslet Street,
London E1 6QH.

YOUR leader introduces the acutely practical pedagogic theorem: "If God approves of actions because they themselves are morally right, God is logically dispensable". But any source of morality is therefore logically dispensable, and morality is simply a work-guarantee. So moral education, even when it is about anti-racism, pacifism or rape, amounts to saying to young people: "You might like to join in this game, if you do, these are the rules, but of course, you don't have to play". Dr Tait seems to be right. Even in a secular society that wants to educate its children in morality, God is necessary until something better comes along. As yet, it has not.

Richard Wilkins,
General Secretary,
Association of
Christian Teachers,
44 St Albans, Herts AL1 1NX.



INDEED, it is vitally important that moral values should be addressed in schools (Teaching Moral Values, Leader, January 16). It is right to congratulate the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) on the initiative it has taken. It is crucial, however, to recall the context of social, ethnic and gender inequality within which such initiatives take their course, and in which moral values are—or are not—taught and caught. In recent years, inequality has grown in Britain faster and

more than in almost any other industrialised country. Almost a third of all children in British schools now live in poverty, as internationally defined and measured. The recent increases have disproportionately affected black and ethnic minority communities, and other communities in urban areas.

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Robin Richardson,
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Questions for a minister of Wales

WE are witnessing a deluge of business managers by the House of Commons to avoid the Secretary of State for Wales having to respond to those issues which Welsh constituency MPs wish to raise at Question Time. Welsh Office questions take place only once a month for 40 minutes. Subjects are balloted, with some 30 questions being so selected. Normally, therefore, there is a reasonable chance for the 32 Welsh Opposition MPs to get their question balloted.

However, increasingly over recent months English constituency MPs are pouring their names into this ballot, putting down questions which

are "helpful" for the Welsh Secretary, and by winning places in the ballot are excluding Welsh MPs from being able to choose questions on matters of importance to them and their constituents.

On Monday January 22, of the first 24 questions tabled, 17 were from English constituency MPs. I have no doubt that this policy, to avoid the Secretary of State for Wales having to answer questions from Welsh MPs, is being deliberately orchestrated by the Government's Welsh Office. Dafydd Wigley MP, President, Plaid Cymru, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

A rearward action for all victims of violence

AS THE solicitor of Donna Maguire I was surprised to read your reference (January 18) to Ms Maguire and I fighting a "rearward action" following the award to her of £13,555. As you rightly pointed out that I viewed the criticism of the award as "hysterical", it might have been more informative if you had explained my reasons for using such a word.

Firstly, the case was heard before an extremely experienced and respected High Court judge and the award was made because it was proved that the claim was genuine.

Secondly, that is the function of a judge in a civil court in a democratic society. He hears the evidence in open court and if the claim is genu-

ine he awards the appropriate measure of damages. He fulfils this role impartially and free from political influence or considerations.

Thirdly, as a solicitor, I have, over many years, acted on numerous occasions for the bereaved and other victims of violence. I agree that the amounts of compensation offered to, and often received by, such victims, especially the bereaved—eg the family of Tim Parry—is woefully inadequate.

I note that David Wilshire, the Conservative MP for Speithorne, has tabled a Commons motion calling on the Government to end the "unfairness of current compensation schemes", and that he has

pointed out that the Parry family only received £7,500. Did he table any such motion when Michael Howard was pressing ahead with his recent plans to reduce the amount payable to the victims of violence? I seem to recall that Mr Howard was only prevented from doing this by the courts.

Leo White,
42 Mansham Street,
Newry, Co Down,
Northern Ireland, BT36 6AY.

Letters to the Editor may be faxed on 0171 837 4530 or sent by post to 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3EA, and by e-mail to letters@guardian.co.uk. We may edit them for clarity and concision.

A Country Diary

NORTH PEMBROKESHIRE: Fieldfares and redwings were the forerunners of the cold snap. All holly trees were stripped within three days. The invaders moved on, gathering up all the smaller groups which had been foraging in the Hawthorns for weeks. But, as the cold settled in, two indignant swainson's thrushes appeared at the bird table. In the summer I hear, but rarely see, these birds, so it was a real pleasure to watch them. They are chubby with light grey underparts, brown wings and their unmistakable black cap above an insect-eating beak. With few insects about, apples and

peanuts are given some attention, but often their main activity seems to be terrorising smaller birds. The bird table has strips of wood sticking out from each corner, connected with wire to repel cats. A blackcap will perch on the wood, all hunched up and fluffed out. It hurls itself towards any other small bird that appears—this, sparrows, robins, chaffinches, which immediately flee. Only starlings and jackdaws quail the warblers. Nuthatches they ignore. Another over-wintering visitor, a little egret, is daintily stepping through the mud at the Neveon estuary. It keeps itself aloof from company mak-

ing the flocks of calling curlews appear a little loud, whilst the scramble of blue-headed river gulls are crude in comparison. The teal, probably headed for western Siberia in the spring, try to remain apart, but they're surrounded by mallards. Red shanks continue stabling into the mud in some of the great tallies that came by on the fast-flowing, river little grebes startle with bouncy dives and jaunty re-surfacings. One mild day a thrush, high in an ash tree, sang of its spring intentions. A flock of long-tailed tits came by on low willow scrub. You see so much more in leafless winter. **AUDREY INSCHE**

Great debate stakes a claim on tomorrow

Martin Kettle

WHAT did you do in the great stake-holding debate of 1996, daddy? Well, I take the confident view that at last there is a serious opportunity to develop the most realistic means of replacing Thatcherite possessive individualism with an alternative political economy, commanding electoral credibility. The ideas set out by Tony Blair in Singapore have detonated a debate on a scale which he did not anticipate.

This is great. This is how growth-up politics should be. There's only one problem, and it's a big one. We're about to have a general election. Blair may want a debate, but he wants to win the election next time. That is what he's there for. Nevertheless, the imperative of debate and the imperative of electoral discipline are converging on a single point. One of them will have to give. And you don't have to be Stephen Hawking to work out which.

This accounts for an ambivalent quality in the stakeholding debate. The argument is up and running, but, in one important sense, it isn't really a debate at all. It's a launched and irrevocable New Labour commitment. Blair isn't putting some ideas on the table and seeing what the rest of us make of them—although for a lot of people that is an important effect of his Singapore speech. He's saying that this is how he proposes that it is go-

ing to be, and because he's the leader of a political party running up to an election campaign, he can't afford to alter that judgement.

This isn't anyone's fault and it isn't anyone's conspiracy. It is simply the way things are. The reality for Blair, unexpectedly taking over the party two years into a parliament, was that he had to compress the five years allowed to most new leaders into the three that were available. Year one was about changing the party—focused on the reform of Clause 4. Year two is about giving the party something to stand for in the country. Year three is for winning an election.

As things are turning out, however, years two and three are being squeezed together. The result is that Labour is giving birth to its big ideas at the same time as it is squaring up on the centre-ground for an election it cannot afford to lose. In such a squeeze, the

imperatives of the election will inevitably win out. The question which Labour needs to answer, therefore, is what happens to the incomplete debate? For the imperatives of the election do not make the debate less relevant or important, merely less immediate. Labour will still need to have a coherent project after the election. Indeed, assuming Labour wins the election, the need will be greater than ever afterwards.

Labour must therefore do two things. First, it must find the best ways in the circumstances of keeping some sort of debate and exchange going, in spite of the pressure of the election. Second, it must acknowledge now that this is likely to be unfinished business after the election and that there must be more even after Blair and his ministers become daily distracted by the pressures of government.

The difficulty, inevitably, is

to devise ways of sustaining a constructive but real debate within civil society about the Labour government even while that government is in office. The best way of ensuring that those difficulties are minimised is to acknowledge the necessity of the debate in the first place.

Blair is personally good at that. But Labour—closed policy forums and all—is not. Nor, in shades, is British political and governmental culture. Look at the fuss this week when Alistair Burt went freelance and wrote a letter to the Times criticising Lady Thatcher. The reflex of the culture was not that he had said something that the Conservative Party needs to think about, but that it was a sign of malaise for a junior minister to write a non-propaganda letter to the papers.

I don't know whether Blair has given much thought to how to keep useful debate going in his party, and to main-

tain dialogue with it when he is in government. But I do know that all the pressures on him will be to suppress it. He therefore needs to have a pre-emptive strategy in place which includes the government as a whole, and ministers as individuals, within a broader framework of continuing debate about the party's direction.

It means loosening the restraints which parties naturally expect at election time. It means encouraging senior figures to put ideas forward. It means allowing them to disagree publicly without punishment. It means thinking in new ways about collective responsibility. It means recognising that in the real world theory and practice will go on trampling on one another's feet. It's difficult. But the debate which Blair has started about getting the nation back together is too important to stop for the election—or even afterwards.

Why the Sky is not the limit for the nation's TV viewers

DAVID Elstein, Head of Programming at BSkyB, has a point (Free the skies for sport, January 18): politicians need to be fair to the sports bodies and to the subscription channels. But to be fair to the public, they have to balance those needs against the interests of the nation at large, who regard events like football cup finals and the Wimbledon finals as part of the national heritage. It seems perfectly proper and democratic that these events should be protected for the population at large to enjoy on free-to-air television services.

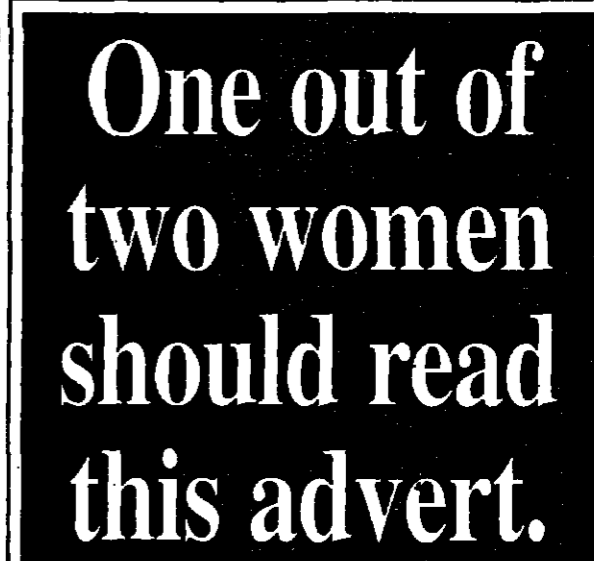
Mr Elstein is right to say that the BBC has an income of £1.7 billion. We do, but we need to spread that £1.7 billion across five radio networks, two television networks and regional services, providing original, quality programming in drama, entertainment, music, arts, children's programmes, education, and news and information—as well as sport. That is what our licence-payers want us to do.

It is disingenuous of Mr Elstein to suggest that the BBC is wrong to spend the television licence fee on radio services. He forgets that the BBC began as a radio broadcaster and that our new Charter, supported by all political parties,

requires us to continue all current services. Will Wyatt, Managing Director, BBC Television, Wood Lane, London W12 7RJ.

SHORTLY after taking my customary lunch yesterday at Le Caprice, I was quietly enjoying a Mars Bar or two when I came across your scurrilous story (Artyfacts, Review, January 15) suggesting that certain episodes of A History of British Art had had to be reshoot for continuity reasons owing to the steady expansion of my waistline during the time the series has been in production. This is quite false. Your correspondent must have confused the word "waistline" with the word "argument".

It is true that I have got a little larger since giving up smoking just over a year ago, and one or two of my cruetler colleagues have been known to refer to me as Andrew Graham-Dumpling. But I promise you (and all television licence-fee payers) that re-shoots for reasons of fatness have not been necessary. Andrew Graham-Dixon, Writer and presenter, A History of British Art, BBC Television Centre, Wood Lane, London W12 7RJ.



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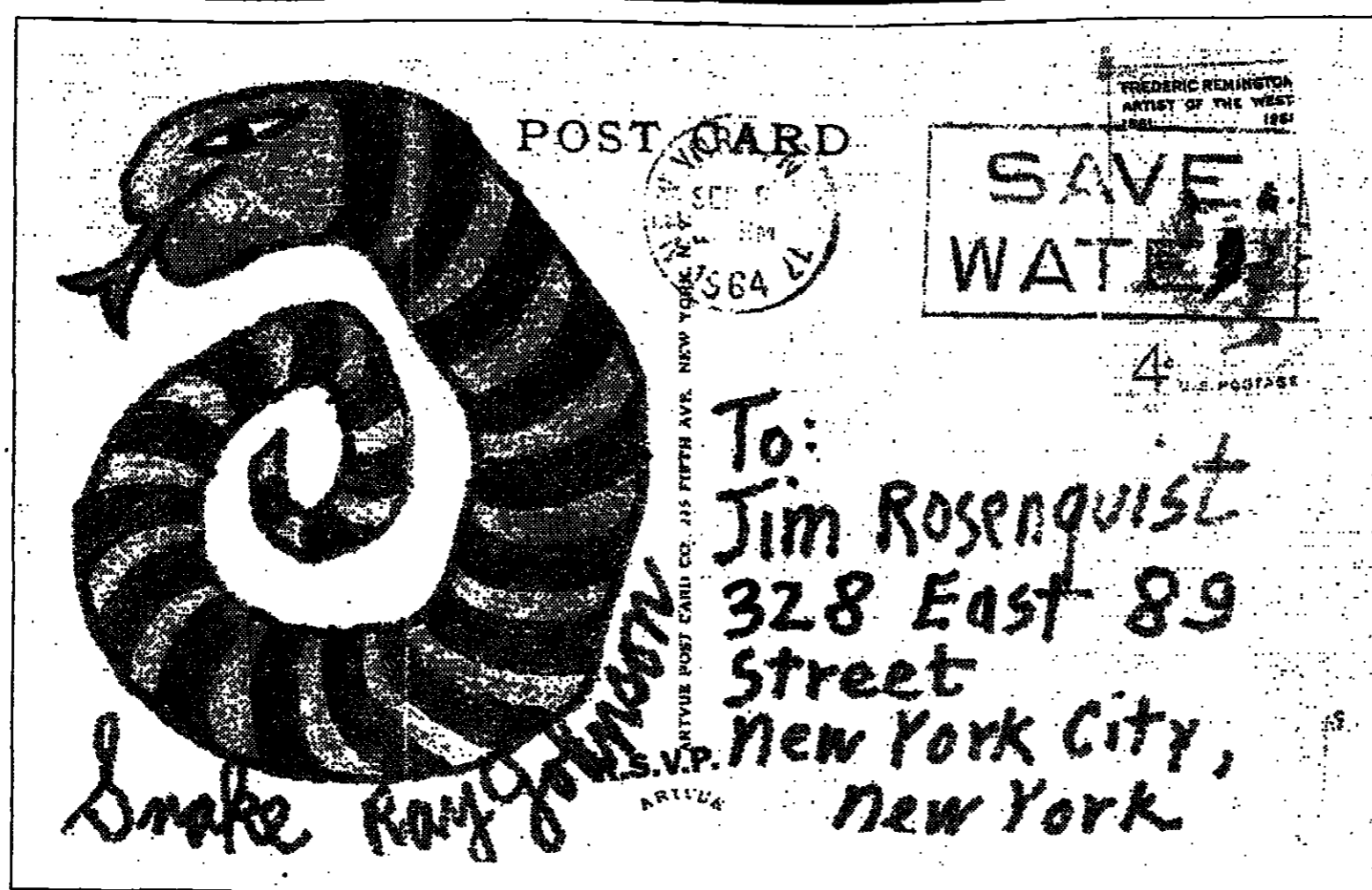
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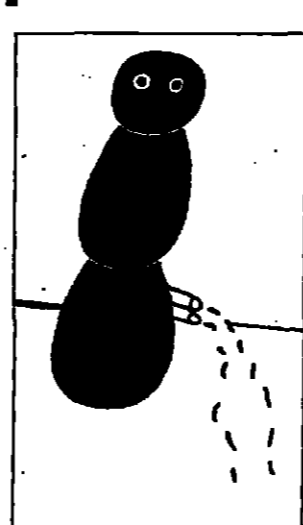
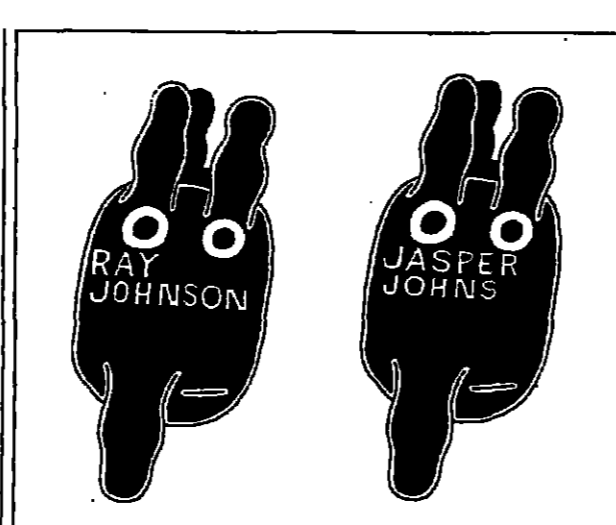
Until his suicide a year ago, junk artist Ray Johnson surfed the US Mail. Now his postcards are collectors' items. JONATHAN JONES sums up a man who put his stamp on New York from the pop art era to the cyberspace age



Our special correspondent

RAY JOHNSON was attacked with a knife in New York city on the same night that Andy Warhol was recovered. Warhol retreated from the experiments of the Factory. Ray Johnson, equally traumatised, moved from Manhattan to suburban Long Island.

marketplace in the that way Duchamp's readymades eventually were. The complete corpus of Johnson's art may always elude critics and compilers of catalogues. Mail art ends up all over the place and is not necessarily valued by its recipients.



Pop artist Jim Rosenquist gets the message (top). Johnson's trademark bunny is just recognisable (left) in one of a series sent to Olive Plalpost, then librarian at New York's Museum of Modern Art; and (right) junk artist's impression of Andy Warhol urinating

From there he mailed ironic collages and mysterious jokes to hundreds of correspondents ranging from famous artists to crazy outsiders. He called his network of pen pals the New York Correspondence School, mail art made him a cult figure. Today it is claimed as a forerunner of e-mail art. But Johnson didn't stick around to surf the Net. On the evening of January 13 last year he drowned himself off Long Island.

At Black Mountain College both artists learned about Dada from John Cage. Rauschenberg said he wanted to act in the gap between art and life. Asked to paint a portrait of Iris Clert he replied with a telegram which stated: "This is a portrait of Iris Clert if I say so."

posed his art to surprise and hazard. Would it be recognised and cherished as an aesthetic creation, or thrown away like unsolicited correspondence? Would it even be delivered?

plan attitude to New York's postal system was sincere and profound. The New York Correspondence School was the name of his postal Utopia. Johnson's friends recall how in the early sixties they would spend evenings out in Manhattan with the artist, exploring the city's pleasures and mysteries at sites ranging from gay bars to Bellevue Hospital.

institutional identity, Johnson reinforced this act of naming. In the same breath, however, he introduced a note of self-mockery. The New York Correspondence School sounds like some seedy postal college with an office near Times Square. Then again, it may imply genuine didacticism, a lesson from New York.

beauty in junk mail.

Mail art owes something to Andy Warhol. One of Ray Johnson's best jokes, for a start, was made at his famous friend's expense. The Warholian idea of a banalised fame — available to everyone but only for 15 minutes — was echoed in Johnson's postal network. For in the world of mail art, there really were no barriers between the famous and the unknown. Johnson wrote to them all, implicitly urging them to write to each other.

A delivery of post modernism: mail art today

ARTIST Mark Pawson says: "I still have faith in the postal system." Mail art is very much alive. The arrival of the Internet has excited artists, but most of them are interested in online art has disappointed.



in Taunton. Artists are invited to send postcards which reflect personal or public events in the past year. In keeping with the openness of the project, all work that meet the criteria of size and theme are exhibited.

The Book of the Week

35,000 copies sold in Hardback, updated and available in paperback! WILL BUTTON The State We're In

Whale fellow hell met

Radio Lyn Gardner

JAMES WHALE has not been having a good week on Talk Radio UK. Some students have been stalking Whale over the airwaves breaking out in bleats every time they manage to get on the air.

zens paragons, and caller after caller was treated to peacocks of praise for the obscure parts of the United Kingdom. On Thursday night he got quite carried away and dedicated the entire programme to Hartlepool.

perience. There is an honesty about this kind of radio that, when it is expertly handled, renders all those experts pontificating on Radio 4 quite redundant.

Double Bill, single Cybill

Television

Stuart Jeffries

IF THERE'S one rule of police drama, it's that when officers say they're looking forward to walking the Pennine Way on a forthcoming holiday, they won't make it to the closing credits, let alone into their hiking boots. Kathy Marshall didn't get as far as the first commercial break before they were dragging her body from the Thames.

responses of TV cops when one of their own has been taken. If there was one thing that delayed one's fast-forwarding attention, it was the bizarre topography of London that The Bill inhabits. It is apparently set in east London, but much of its location work is shot in south-west London.

Reviews

DANCE

SHAPE The Place

poses of yearning, love and rejection. Their ordinary bodies look inarticulate and coupled — they seem to be the couple's vulnerable ego.

CLASSICAL

Bruckner Barbian/Radio 3

TO THE list of its symphony cycles, presented with great success over the years — Mahler, Sibelius and Vaughan Williams among them — the LSO now adds Bruckner.

Ninth Symphony. Sir Colin is above all a tough Brucknerian, and the massive half-hour span of the first movement was unrelenting in its power and concentration.

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سكا من الامل

Vertical text on the right edge of the page, partially cut off, including names like Boris, and phrases like 'more', 'review', 'president'.

Fergie and Diana must unite and fight if they are to survive, says SUZANNE MOORE. Illustration by STEVE CAPLIN

Princesses Plc versus the Palace

LAST year Sarah Ferguson worked very hard at doing what the tabloids had suggested she should do for some time. She lost a lot of weight. This was still not good enough. The verdict of The Sun's slimming editor was this: "Fergie may have lost two stone but it is very doubtful she will keep it off... she associates food with pleasure, not pain. And in the end Fergie always puts pleasure at the very top of her shopping list."

Her shopping list, as we now know, is another problem even the new slimmer, trimmer duchess cannot not escape from. Her rumoured debts of up to £3 million have become public knowledge with the Palace issuing a statement to say that she is on her own. The Queen has reportedly bailed her out twice before, once for half a million, and she is not prepared to do it again.

It is interesting that the focus should now be on Fergie. She admitted last May in Hello! magazine that she was in "financial straits", and one can't help thinking that the Palace statement may have been issued to deflect some of the media heat that has recently been put on the Queen and Prince Philip's marriage with the publication of Sarah Bradford's book. The monarchy knows that if it is not to



were the final straw. The mother-in-law from hell made it perfectly clear that even if she were reconciled with Andrew she would never be given any official duties. How could a woman whom the public has seen having her toes sucked stand in front of the Cenotaph? Worse still the rose-growing association changed the name of a rose named in her honour from Duchess of

York to Sunseeker. Since then Fergie has been a semi-detached member of the royals, jettisoned round the world to burst into tears at the plight of deprived children. She has been criticised for the amount of holidays she takes, her clothes, her bad behaviour (which seems to involve little more than throwing bags of sugar about on a aeroplane, putting a paper bag over her head and making bird noises) and — shock, horror — admitting to Aids tests as well as using condoms. She is, according to Lord Charteris, the Queen's former private secretary, "a vulgarian... vulgar, vulgar, vulgar". Indeed this is the gist of much of the current criticism of her plight.

There are those who object not to the fact that she had

lived so beyond her means, that these amounts of money are obscene, but that she has not spent the money in "a tasteful, elegant fashion which would not frighten either the horses or the House of Windsor".

A colleague who worked with her before the marriage said that "she never had any taste. She used to wear pop socks and slippers at work. She simply wasn't interested in clothes and she was never greedy. Her idea of a big spend was two skirts at Monsoon."

She remembers that after the engagement was announced, Andrew would go round to her flat with his staff and "the wardrobe was culled". Yet Fergie's extravagance seems to stem largely from a lack of discrimination about what is good. She will buy the most expensive things as if to prove her own self-worth. Like many shopaholics she is trying to buy both approval and love.

Like Diana, she has described her feelings of low self-esteem and last year told an American audience that after her marriage "there I was at the Palace, wandering with no compass, no fixed sense of what to do. It wasn't that I lacked the will or the ability. I simply did not know what was expected of me." Does she know any better now? She was praised at first for "being her-

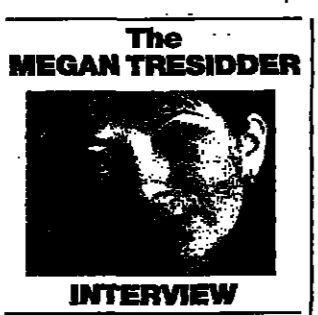
self", but being herself is increasingly what gets her into trouble.

Diana has described a similar situation, and it is telling that both these women's distress should manifest itself through problems around consuming. Diana became bulimic. Fergie meanwhile has over-consumed through shopping. (I have been told that there is even something called shopping bulimia where you go mad at the shops and then take it all back again the next day.) It is as if the demands that are currently being made on the royal family — that it should be leaner and fitter — are being played out through the lives and bodies of Diana and Fergie. Both women are seen as too emotional and excessive, as too much, as loose cannons who want a royal lifestyle but do not behave like proper royals should.

The question, then, is simply this. Does marriage into the royal family guarantee that you are a royal for ever? One presumes that producing heirs to the throne might be a sufficient guarantee, but there are calls for both DI and Fergie to be stripped of their titles. To do so would reduce them to little more than brood mares, but the argument is that they have not earned respect in the way that someone like Princess Anne has done. What is never in question is the behav-

Ann Widdecombe's Christian values include blaming hungry families for their poverty and allowing pregnant prisoners to be shackled. Photograph by DAVID SILLITOE

Doris and those monster morals



INTERVIEW

ANN Widdecombe begins conversationally. "I hope you are not going to talk rubbish like the last interviewer who kept asking me stuff about whether I cried when my cats died. Never heard such total rot." Her response oozes confidence. It will be his only moment of relaxation. Keeping the Prisons Minister in check is a job he will do valiantly — using a code of facial twitches — but not with total success.

In her eight years as Conservative MP for Maidstone, Ann Widdecombe has been exceedingly controversial. When, in 1991, a survey showed one in five families were going hungry, she suggested that since four in five were not, hungry families might be mismanaging things. In 1993, she converted to Catholicism in protest at the ordination of women in the Anglican Church and also at the tendency, as she put it, for some bishops to say "if thou shalt not sin except if thou be unemployed". She has fundamentalist beliefs, seeing Heaven "as people in white nightgowns with lots of harps and Hell as a place with lots of burning lakes". She is hard-right, anti-abortion, and a workaholic who, at 48, remains unmarried.

She has had a hellish New Year. First there was the case of the Saudi dissident, Mohammed al-Mas'ari, who is appealing against deportation to Dominica. Widdecombe says she cannot be allowed to jeopardise British trade with the Saudis, and British jobs. Then, she defended the policy of shackling pregnant prisoners to hospital beds, claiming the support of NHS staff, until their disavowal forced her to apologise in the Commons this week. She has been accused of lacking sensitivity through being childless herself. And yesterday, the shackling policy she so valiantly upheld was scrapped.

She is only just over five feet tall — her smallness

intensified by the vastness of her room at the Home Office. She is wearing a startling suit of purple and green stripes. Her nails are painted bright red and her shiny helmet of black hair is matched by her black patent leather shoes.

She is much more vivacious and less dour than her caricature as Doris Karloff. She has an unexpected dry humour, especially about comments on her appearance. "I actually roared with laughter," she says, "when I saw the Mirror's spoof [superimposing her face on the photograph of a chained prisoner]. I hadn't looked as slim as that in years. Mind you, it was the body of a pregnant lady..."

"My mother always says I have her looks," she says, "and my father's disposition. He was very ambitious, very go-ahead." He was a naval armaments supply officer.

Ann, who has one brother — Canon Widdecombe, an evangelical priest — was schooled at a convent in Bath. "They were very rigorous but encouraged you to believe you could do anything you wanted to. I never had an ambition crushed in my life. I was very ambitious, very." After graduating with two degrees, one in Latin, and working in marketing and as a financial administrator for London University, she won Maidstone in 1987 and was Major's first woman minister.

Dick Crossman predicted she would be the first female Whip. You can see why. She may be upfront and loud-mouthed — rot, rubbish and stupid are favourite words — but she is fancy with her footwork, both in the Commons, where she is an expert on procedure, and during this interview. Most striking of all is her self-certitude. She talks in the crisp, sing-song tones of someone who is so sure they are right, it wears them to spell out why.

"My philosophy," she says, "is *corpe diem*. I live for the duty of the day. In a couple of weeks' time, I shan't worry about this week."

Not even worry about "Annette", who wrote to The Guardian describing how being chained had degraded giving birth?

"No," says Widdecombe. "She may say that. Only she can say how she feels. But I had a duty to carry out, which was to balance the needs of the general public in terms of safety..."

Not a very Christian reaction, though, is it?



A study of self-certitude... "The nuns encouraged you to believe you could do anything you wanted to. I never had an ambition crushed in my life. I was very ambitious, very"

"I think that's absolutely stupid. Protecting the public is an extremely Christian thing to do."

But "Annette" was only charged with shoplifting.

"I don't comment on individual cases," she replies.

Pregnant prisoners will no longer be shackled in hospital. But the question remains: why was the policy not reviewed earlier? Both Alan Howarth and Emma Nicholson, after all, cited the policy as proof of the uncaring nature of the Tories, and the Labour MP George Howarth raised his concerns with Widdecombe last December.

Her reply makes the press officer twitch. "Well, I think everyone understands that until a policy is changed, you defend a current policy. That is just a political fact of life. As far as I am concerned, the policy I had to defend was the existing policy. We were aware that there were concerns but the government has to translate those concerns into action were not completed and pending that completion, the policy stood."

Didn't she have her own concerns?

"I had two concerns, one of which I was able to make clear at the start [after Jack Straw's private member's question this month] of male officers being involved and also about security." Of 20 female escapes in the last five years, she says, "five or seven" were pregnant.

But none were heavily pregnant.

"You're quite right. We have never had anybody escape who was on the verge of giving birth. But we didn't restrain them when they are on the verge of giving birth. When medical advice confirmed that labour had started, restraints were removed."

So why was the policy reviewed?

She pauses. "We were simply asking whether any aspects of the policy could be changed."

We move on to Mr Mas'ari, who fled torture and imprison-

ment in Saudi Arabia and is now appealing against deportation. Does Widdecombe accept that in bowing to the Saudis, for reasons of realpolitik, the moral argument has been squandered?

"I don't think it has. Let's presume that we have to protect Mr Mas'ari, though we haven't yet substantively considered his claim to asylum, but let's also understand that we cannot have a friendly country being continually upset... We would dearly like everybody to say absolutely anything they like but you do have to consider the consequences."

But what if Nigeria had demanded that Britain cease its support of Ken Saro-Wiwa? What if China threatened trade sanctions unless we

for instance, her attack two years ago on the Archbishop of Canterbury giving an Easter sermon on the growing gap between rich and poor.

"What I actually criticised was the use of a particular set of statistics for political purposes. If you are the Archbishop of Canterbury giving an Easter sermon, I don't expect it to develop into a party political broadcast. My objection was not that the Church sought to comment on social issues but that it should be responsible for the statistics."

She much preferred the political sermon at the Catholic Westminster Cathedral. Was that because it offered an escape from the reality of a divided society?

"The Easter message is reality. I believe it happened. I want to hear about it. I don't want a sermon based on secular considerations. That is not to say that one shouldn't have sermons on poverty. But if you politicise those sermons, that raises different questions. I have noticed a huge difference since moving to the Catholic in the spiritual content of the sermons, in a concentration of the mind on the life to come, as well as on the physical requirements for this life."

Shouldn't a politician be concerned with life now?

"Oh no, no, no," she tuts. "This politician is concerned with finding solutions to today's problems but at the same time, this politician is also a practising Christian with a soul and a spiritual life that needs to be tended."

It certainly is, for the British government to surrender the principle of freedom of speech.

"I don't think we have surrendered that principle. Mr Mas'ari can say whatever he wants to say — in Dominica. I think," she adds, looking across to her twitching press officer, "that we will have to stop this conversation."

No matter. Widdecombe's career is like the ultimate lucky dip box: stick your hand in and there is always something else to unwrap. There is,

ing you aren't giving me the evidence at the moment."

If anything illustrates the difficulties of being an hard-right Christian politician it is at the end of our conversation, when we get on to prisons, Widdecombe's newest problem. This week, the Prison Officers' Association protested that cuts will drastically impair the programme of rehabilitation in prisons, and will force wardens back into the role of mere turnkeys.

Widdecombe starts with a polished line of crisis-what-cries: "We are convinced that across the Prison Service as a whole, there are still efficiencies to be had. There will have to be some trimming but that doesn't mean there will be huge incursions into education in prisons. What you don't do is have everyone back in their cells doing nothing."

But there is talk of having to reduce out-of-cell time from 12 hours a day to eight.

"I'm saying that there won't be a blanket cut-back... But if you have to lock someone up for a bit longer to have a better regime during the day when they are out, then you have a trade-off."

To which, you have to ask, how does her Christian conscience handle the notion of political trade-off? When she sits in church, is her conscience clear that the cuts will not affect her declared commitment to rehabilitation?

"I am not saying I don't have concerns. I am not saying that there are things I would like to do that I can't do at the moment. I am not even saying the entire prison system is wonderful, but my conscience is clear that I have made the best of it that I can."

In which case, why not approach statistics on poverty with spiritual humility first, and a politician's rigour second? Where is the compassion in immediately questioning the validity of statistics showing one in five families were going hungry?

"It is consistent with compassion to identify what is going wrong, I was simply say-

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Money Guardian

Hard-hit young just say no to life of pay as you learn

The growing fear of debt deters university entrants

Cliff Jones

POVERTY and the prospect of financial hardship are driving down numbers of university applicants. A report from the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals, published this week, reveals that applications for third-level education have fallen for the first time in living memory, despite a steady increase in the number of school leavers.

The committee said that 54,000 first-year students had already left their courses early, 10 per cent more than last year. Almost 60 per cent of these had dropped out for non-academic reasons. Ted Nield, a spokesman for CVCP, said students from underprivileged backgrounds were more likely to leave because of money difficulties.

The report said that 11 per cent of students had not received their grants within one month of starting their course. Local education authority maintenance grants are now £2,340 for students living in London and £1,685 for those studying elsewhere. This year saw the second of three top cent drops in the student grant.

Student loans have increased by more than 10 per cent to an average of £1,685 in London and £1,385 elsewhere. But loans are an unpopular option for many students. The National Union of Students has consistently hit out at the Government's steady reduc-

tion of grants. Ian Moss, NUS vice-president of welfare, says: "Higher education is increasingly becoming the preserve of the affluent."

Only half of all students eligible actually apply for loans. This is due in part to what are seen as unfair repayment terms. Repayments can be deferred until a graduate has a gross income of more than £15,000 with the interest rate linked to the Retail Price Index. Mr Nield says take-up figures would be higher if the repayment rate were linked to graduates' earnings. At present, the amount to be repaid depends only on the amount borrowed and the time scale of the repayment.

Many students avoid taking out loans by working to supplement their grant or relying on parental contribution. A survey from Barclays Bank found that students graduate with an average debt of £2,293. The bank says that 14 per cent of the latest crop of first-year students have already taken term-time jobs, earning an average of £43.78 per week.

Louise Clarke of the National Union of Students says the figures support its opinion that the Government is doing "absolutely nothing to help students". She says: "We want to encourage people to go on to further education, but high debt levels are making people reconsider enrolling for university."

Sue Prince, studying English Literature and Spanish at Newcastle University, is struggling with debt. She is in her third year and owes



Off course... Student Sue Prince has been forced to take a job paying just £30 per week

PHOTOGRAPH: TED DITCHBURN

£2,000, not including her student loan. Miss Prince receives a full grant but, she says: "As soon as it comes through, I pay off my overdraft. That puts my balance back to nought, but then I have to pay my rent."

The grant covers her rent and some books, but she has to work most nights to support herself and can "barely get by" on the £30 she earns per week. The university has helped her from Access Funds, available to impoverished students, but only by £200 a year.

Miss Prince says that when she graduates she will be

forced to take any job she is offered to repay her debt before she can even consider a career.

The Government is taking steps to make funds available to more students, but its ideas have had a cool reception. The Student Loans Bill, which received its third reading in the Commons this week, has so far failed to convince banks and building societies. Banks already provide an average of £750 interest-free credit through their overdraft facilities and do not see any commercial benefit in offering further loans.

The NUS has promised to boycott banks and building

societies which offer the loans, although it admits that it is unlikely that banks will become involved. Ms Clarke says: "There is no point in them taking interest in a scheme which does not work."

The CVCP expects that those who have just started their three-year course will owe al-

most £5,000 when they graduate. Grant cuts and rising loans will create an even bigger burden for students on five-year courses. They will face a debt of £9,517 when they complete their studies.

Money Guardian is edited by Margaret Hughes

Societies under siege as savers look for windfalls

SAVERS besieged building societies this week in an attempt to open accounts and cash in on windfalls following renewed speculation that the Alliance & Leicester is on the verge of announcing a flotation, writes Cliff Jones.

But societies acted equally quickly to stem the flow of new customers.

The Alliance & Leicester — Britain's fourth biggest building society — withdrew its range of membership accounts to new investors on Tuesday, followed by the Britannia on Wednesday, which closed its instant access account to investors who had queued outside branches to open accounts.

Bristol & West raised the minimum opening balance to £2,500 on its Select, Share, Premier Saver and Premier Plus membership accounts. It said that the number of people opening accounts was causing delays for existing customers.

Northern Rock yesterday increased the minimum opening investment on all of its share accounts from £250 to £2,500.

Former Tessa-holders with the Woolwich should act fast if they want to retain their membership rights.

The society is allowing people until January 23 to transfer their money back into a share account if they moved their mature Tessa money into a Woolwich Personal Equity Bond or Guaranteed Income Bond, thus breaking membership rights.

Savers must transfer their money back before the deadline if they are to receive any free shares when the society becomes a bank. The society

has said it will not allow similar concessions for former account-holders who took their Tessa capital and interest out of the society.

Elsewhere, more than 1.4 million members of the National & Provincial Building Society will have their say on the Abbey National's takeover offer at a special general meeting to be held in Manchester.

Members will be able to vote either in person or by post at the Nynex Arena on April 11.

Those with savings accounts will only have voting rights if they held £100 in their accounts on December 31, 1995. About 700,000 non-voting members will not be entitled to the £500 free Abbey shares to be awarded to voting savers and borrowers.

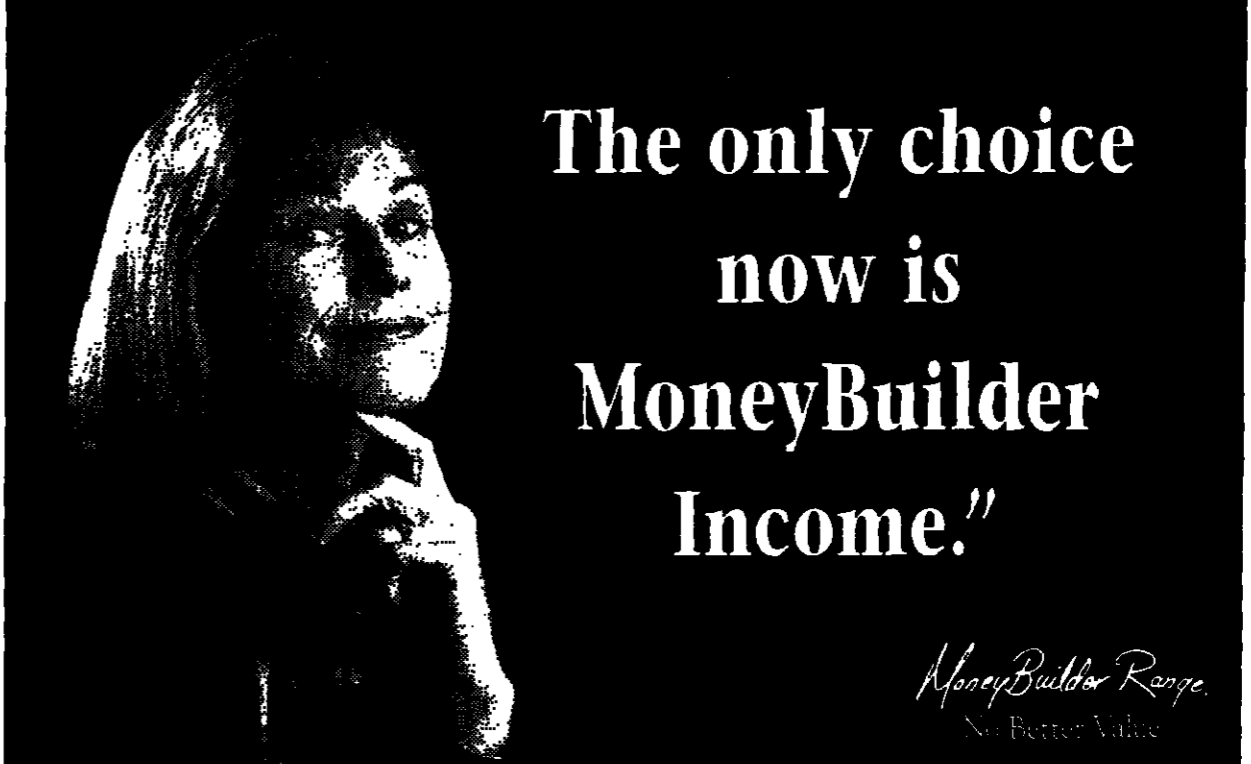
N&P says these people, some of whom have held £100 in their accounts on April 28, 1996, will receive a "relatively small cash payment".

Members of more than two years will benefit from a larger pay-out of £750 in Abbey shares plus a percentage of their balance. All members must have at least £100 in their share accounts on the day when the N&P's business is transferred to the Abbey in the late summer.

For the merger to be approved, 75 per cent of those who exercise their vote must consent to the proposals and at least half of all investing members must approve the deal. A majority of borrowers must vote in favour before the business can be transferred.

Leeds and Halifax members overwhelmingly voted in favour of a merger at special general meetings by a margin of 19 to one.

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Death Notices

Births

Various small notices and advertisements at the bottom left of the page.

Top industrial nations meet in Paris to find ways of encouraging growth and cutting the dole queues

Slump fear dogs G7 summit

Larry Elliott
Economics Editor

FINANCE ministers and central bankers from the world's leading industrial nations were gathered in Paris today amid growing fears that the global economy may be sliding back into recession.

The sombre mood was intensified yesterday with the news that activity in Germany — the motor of the European economy — contracted in the final three months of last year.

With only Japan of the leading nations hopeful of an acceleration in growth this year, the gathering will explore ways of boosting activity and cutting the dole queues.

Robert Rubin, the United States Treasury Secretary, reflected the downbeat mood yesterday when he said the "excellent performance" of in-

flation in the big three economies of the US, Germany, and Japan offered some room to respond to slower growth. But the White House chief economist, Joseph Stiglitz, forecast growth of up to 2.3 per cent this year.

The other G7 countries will seek reassurance from Mr Rubin that the long-running US budget crisis will be resolved quickly, since the deadlock between Congress and the Clinton White House has put upward pressure on long-term global interest rates.

The French government is certain to use its role as host to push for an easing of monetary policy, putting pressure on the German Bundesbank to provide a Europe-wide cut in interest rates.

The Bundesbank vice-president Johann Wilhelm Gaddum said the bank should wait at least until January M3 growth is released before considering a further move on

key rates — or after February 20, when this data is released. But there is widespread expectation of a further easing of German base rates sooner rather than later.

Officials in Bonn remain confident that the German economy will pick up as 1996 wears on, but the economics ministry admitted yesterday that activity fell back in the fourth quarter.

"After pan-German gross domestic product no longer expanded in the third quarter of last year, it should rather have decreased somewhat in the final quarter," the ministry said in a summary of its January economic report.

Sources admit that the recent softening of the world economy — particularly in Europe — has caught the G7 off guard.

A senior British official said the theme of today's meeting would be the health of the world economy, adding: "A month ago that probably

would not have been the case." The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, will stress the need for structural reforms of labour markets, rehearsing the arguments that he will deploy at the G7 Jobs Summit to be held in Lille, France, in early April.

Mr Clarke will argue that labour-market flexibility, rather than cyclical factors such as the timing of economic recovery, explains why Britain has a lower rate of unemployment than most European nations, and that deregulation will increase the demand for jobs.

However, the UK's quarter-point reduction in base rates on Thursday has prompted optimism that the G7 talks may be followed by a co-ordinated cut in the cost of borrowing.

The French, in particular, are desperate to find ways of bolstering growth to help them fulfil the Maastricht criteria for a single currency.

parliament gives the figure as 8.130 billion yen, 76 per cent of the total portfolio of the Jusen. Optimistically, the report estimates actual losses will be 6,270 billion yen since some money may be collected or collateral sold, a view that outside analysts greeted with scepticism.

The opposition Shinshinto (New Frontier Party) has said that it will fight the use of taxpayers' money in any bail-out.

growth of Japan and the world.

Mr Kubo will tell the G7 he has a plan to resolve the problem, but that he has yet to convince the Japanese public they should contribute 688 billion yen (\$4.3 billion) in taxes to rescue the Jusen. This task became harder yesterday with publication of a 388-page report admitting that seven Jusen had more than 250 billion in bad loans.

The report presented to

Notebook

Maxwell points to need for overhaul



Alex Brummer

THE acquittal of Kevin and Ian Maxwell, after the longest jury sequester in British legal history, is a seminal moment for the conduct of serious fraud investigations and trials in Britain. It was as much the Serious Fraud Office and the jury system for dealing with fraud in Britain as the Maxwell brothers and their co-defendant Larry Trachtenberg which has been on trial for the past 131 days.

The objective of the SFO this time around was to bury the memory of a series of high profile failures stretching back across its seven-year history which has seen a botched plea bargain in the case of insurance broker-to-the-stars Roger Levitt, demands from the heart of the City establishment walk free in the case of the Blue Arrow and Guinness II trials; the farce of the Polly Peck boss Asil Nadir disappearing to Northern Cyprus and the humiliation of watching the Singapore authorities ditch out summary justice to Nick Leeson before the UK authorities barely stirred.

If ever there was a prosecution which the SFO could have believed it might pull off it was the Maxwell case. It was an opportunity to bring to justice from beyond the grave the extraordinary fraudster Robert Maxwell whose death ruined the retirement of thousands of pensioners in Maxwell associated companies, causing immeasurable disruption and misery.

and leaving out some of the more technical offences which have been characteristic of previous fraud trials, the SFO deprived itself of the chance of at least gaining a result on lesser offences.

The only real way in which the current system of financial regulation and serious fraud can be fixed is from the ground up. Britain, like the United States, needs a far more powerful, durable and convincing system of civil law to deal with financial fraud. The current system, policed by a hierarchy of interlocking regulators, overseen by a powerless Securities & Investment Board, is simply not working.

INSTEAD, the SIB or its successor needs to have an array of civil penalties, ranging from restitution to fines and a way of going near people's money again which can deal summarily and efficiently with all but the most serious offences, like those of Robert Maxwell.

It is astonishing that Nick Leeson has begun his seven-year prison term in Singapore, yet the Securities & Futures Authority in Britain has still to take any disciplinary action against anyone connected with Barings.

The UK system of regulation moves without the clout or deliberate speed which is seen in other free-wheeling Anglo-Saxon style markets.

The SFO may be its own worst enemy in that it is unable to enforce the criminal law as it exists. But successful fraud prosecution — as has been seen in New York with Ivan Bosky and Michael Milken, and in Singapore with Nick Leeson — requires deals to be cut.

The SFO does not need to be closed down or merged with an already overworked Crown Prosecution Service; rather, the Lord Chancellor's office should start to consider the role of plea bargaining in fraud cases.

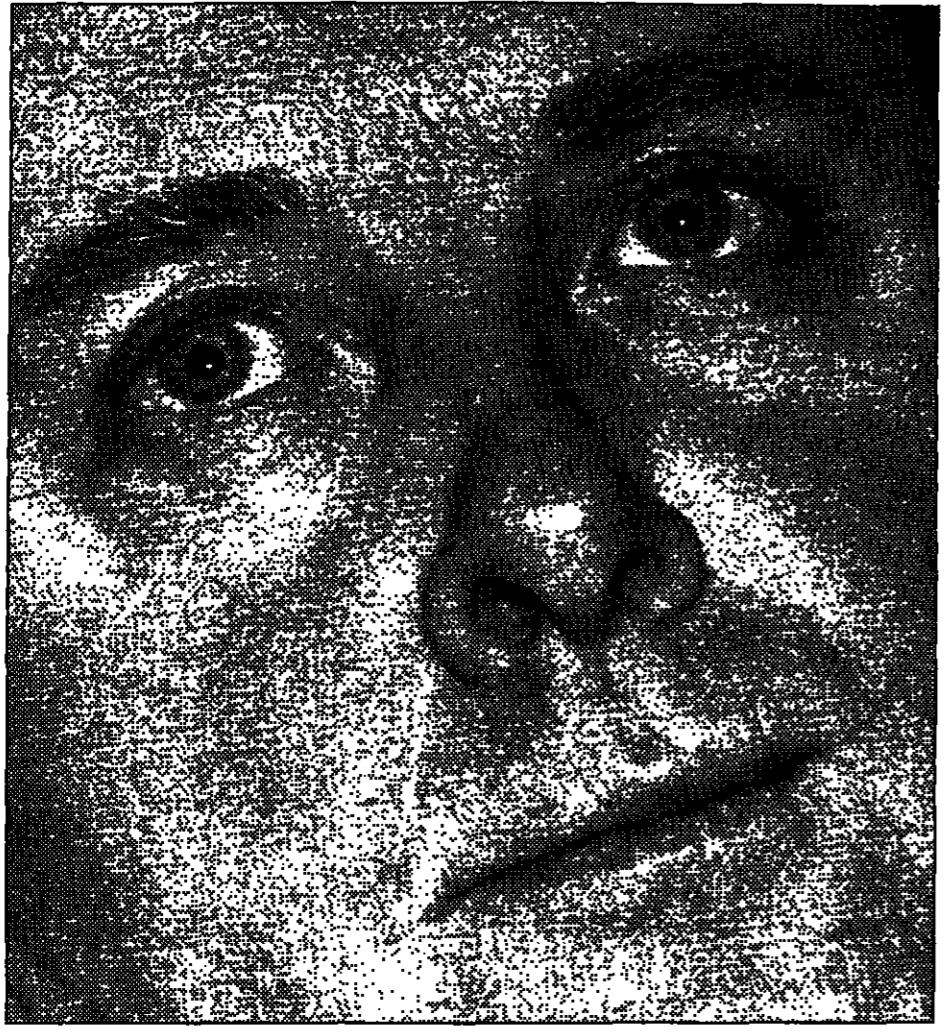
Then there is the question of juries. For the moment, let us put aside the uniqueness of the Maxwell jury — in terms of the length of its sequester and the result it brought forth. Any trial which takes place over 131 days and involves thousands of incomprehensible documents is bound to be a nightmare for those called upon to reach a verdict.

However well qualified the jury may be it is certain to be confused by the most complex evidence. If Robert Maxwell was able to borrow £500 million from Lloyds Bank, without the right questions being asked, you cannot expect jurors to understand the complexities of using pension fund money to prop up an ailing empire.

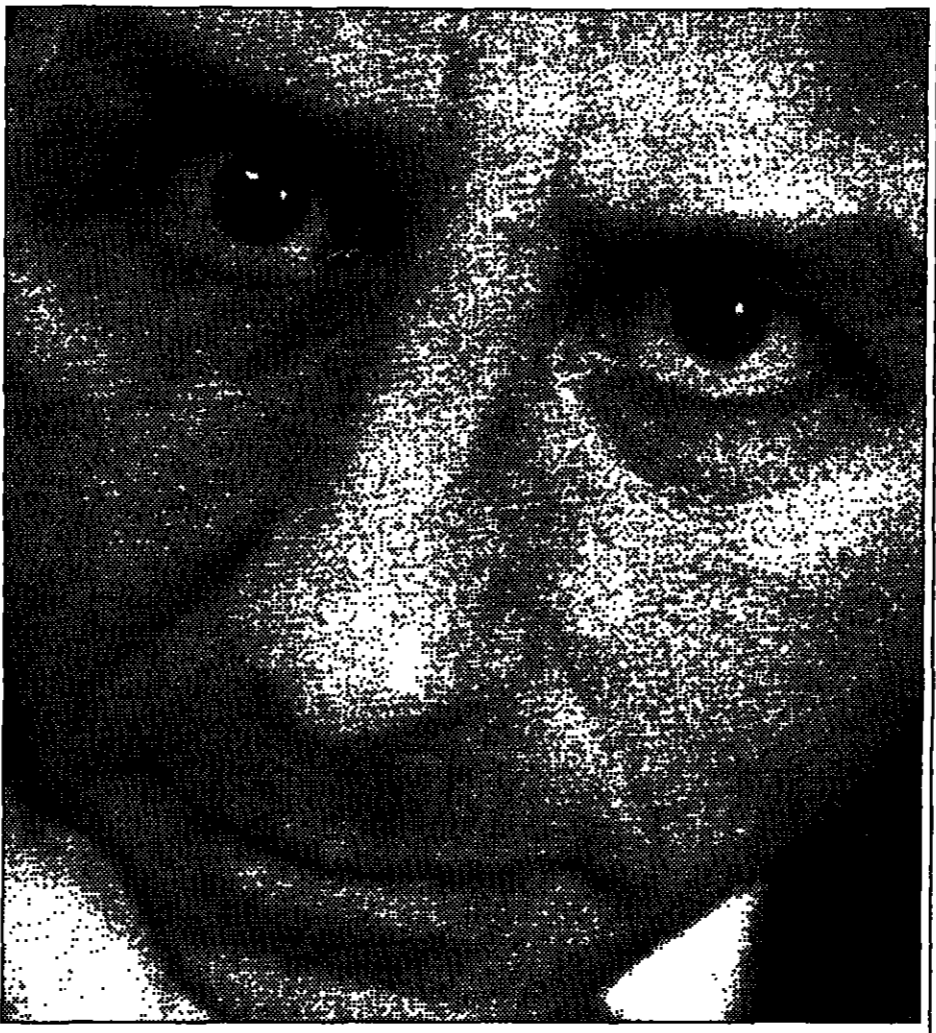
It was Roskill which recommended all those years ago that in the case of serious fraud the judge should sit with an expert panel — perhaps a senior forensic accountant and a leading tax barrister. This would immediately change the nature of serious fraud trials. The mention, which formed quite a large part of the Maxwell defence, would become less important and the money trail — which was critical in bringing down a President in the United States — could be monitored and followed more clearly.

These are sweeping changes which cannot be made overnight. But the current system does not work and given the experience of the past seven years, and the risks a weak system poses to public confidence and London's reputation, it is time for a thoroughgoing review.

Sir Rocco leaves fund managers unconvinced • Mercury Asset Management holds key



Gerry Robinson ... 'key issue is who can deliver best value' PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM WEASER



Sir Rocco Forte ... 'many compelling reasons to reject hostile bid' PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

Granada set for victory

Lisa Buckingham and Ian King

GRANADA looked to be heading for victory in its £3.9 billion bid for Forte last night after fund managers polled by the Guardian said they were backing chief executive Gerry Robinson.

Several investment fund managers said they had already decided to back Granada's hostile offer. Others said they were swinging in favour of the bidder although they would not decide conclusively until after the weekend.

The outcome of the bid is expected to pivot on the decision reached by Carol Galley, vice-chairman of Mercury Asset Management, who, with 14.5 per cent of Forte's shares at her disposal, will decide who wins.

Ms Galley met Mr Robinson for one-and-a-half hours of discussions yesterday morning and talked with Forte's chief executive, Sir Rocco Forte, for a similar length of

time yesterday afternoon. She is thought to favour Mr Robinson but is expected to keep both sides guessing until the bid expires at 5pm next Tuesday.

The depressing news for the Forte camp last night appeared to be underlined by defections amongst traditionally loyal individual shareholders.

But last night, the battle took a dramatic turn when Sir Rocco announced that Sir Rocco had snapped up 3.9 million shares in his company for £14.6 million, or 378p a time.

Sir Rocco — who sold 382,000 shares at 230p a time just seven months ago — said: "I think the shares represent an extremely good long term investment."

In all, more than 26 1/2 million Forte shares changed hands yesterday, of which the vast majority were said by dealers to be small parcels of Forte shares being sold for to institutions for cash.

Apart from individuals, several institutions have been trading in large volumes, with Sun Life among recent sellers.

Amongst the buying, Barings Asset Management and Robert Fleming have been pre-dominant. It is known that Capital Corp — which at the outset of the bid was Forte's second biggest institutional shareholder — has now sold nearly all its stake, including a substantial chunk to Granada's merchant bank advisers earlier this week.

Last night Forte's shares closed down 5 1/2p, at 370p, against Granada's cash offer of 382p a share. But Granada shares closed down 2p at 694p, valuing Granada's cash-and-shares alternative at 387p.

Adding to the pressure on Sir Rocco was news that nine out of the City's top ten analysts backed Granada's bid — the exception being Goldman Sachs, which was neutral.

Fund managers who have seen Sir Rocco's final presentation said they had been unconvinced. They said that although Forte had done a lot to improve its image in the City over the duration of the bid, its management had less credibility than Granada's.

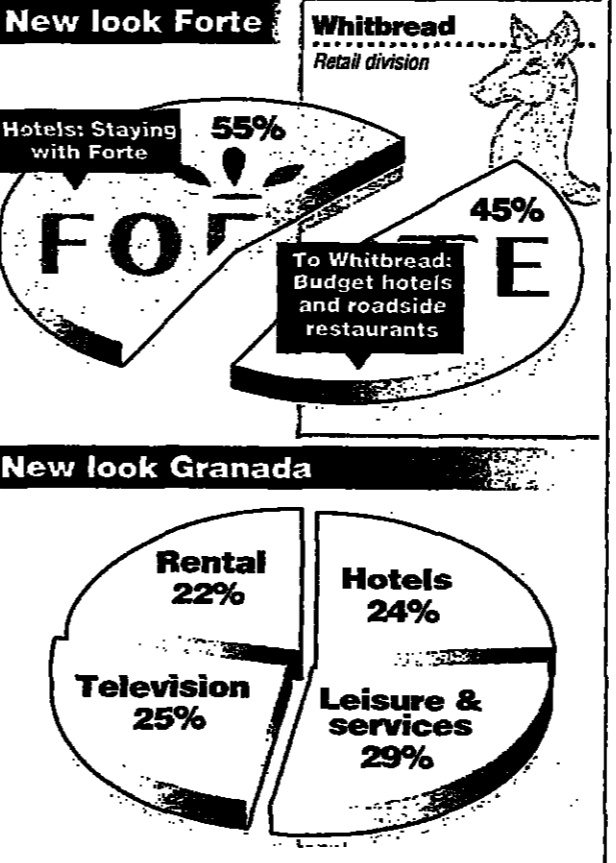
One said: "He looked like a

defeated man. He was exhausted and even seemed unconvinced of his own argument." But the Forte camp remained bullish last night, with Sir Rocco boasting of disposed of an American Meridian hotel for \$17 million, while maintaining the management contract. He said this was an example of the extra value that his team was capable of unlocking.

Meanwhile, the pugacious last minute tub-thumping on behalf of Forte by the Whitbread group appeared to be making the decision less clear cut for some institutions.

Whitbread has a conditional agreement to buy Forte's roadside restaurants and budget hotels for \$1.05 billion, so long as Granada's bid fails. It emerged yesterday that the brewing and retail group had outbid a substantial and highly surprising offer from the Tesco supermarket chain.

Even if Forte survives, City insiders said yesterday that Whitbread could face a counter-bid from a disappointed Granada.



The final words for Guardian readers from the men at the top

Gerry Robinson

THE key issue for Forte shareholders is which management team can deliver the best value for their shares.

The question of who offers greater value today is a simple one to answer. On any objective analysis, Granada's offer is worth considerably more than the package available from Forte.

In looking to the future, the enlarged Granada Group will be a well balanced business with four strong divisions, all in the leisure sector.

Each of the divisions — television, hotels, leisure and services and rental — will have a leading position in its respective market.

We have already demonstrated our ability to build

strong and successful businesses in the UK.

Over the last few years, Granada Television and LWT have gone from strength to strength, making more programmes and winning more television awards than at any point in their illustrious histories.

New programmes like Cracker, Jonathan Dimbleby and Band of Gold have joined old favourites like Coronation Street, the South Bank Show and London's Burning.

Our contract catering business — Sutcliffe — now cooks over a million meals a day and its chefs won a record number of medals at this year's Hospitality Week awards.

In motorway service stations we're looking to reinforce our position as market leaders by giving people a much wider choice of catering.

We've already installed

Burger King in most of our sites and we're also testing an American diner concept.

That commitment to provide the customer with a better and wider choice is reflected in our exciting plans for Forte's businesses, many of which are looking rather tired and need rejuvenating.

For example, we want to give Posthouse and Travelodge guests a more up-to-date range of in-room entertainment and business services.

We want to improve the range and quality of food offered in the Posthouse Traders restaurants. We think that Little Chef needs more attractive menus, including an extended all-day snack and patisserie range, healthier items and a take-away service. We also want to try out some new roadside restaurant ideas to appeal to a much wider range of customers.

Rocco Forte

THERE are many compelling reasons why Forte shareholders should reject Granada's hostile bid.

It seriously undervalues Forte and its future prospects. We are Britain's leading international hotel company and we are now in a position to take full advantage of the upswing that the hotel industry is experiencing worldwide. Our newest brand, Meridien, gives us a global reach. We have top quality hotels in the right locations, and we are particularly strong in London, which is the best hotel market in the world.

Granada has been, to say the least, selective in comparing its performance to

ours over the last few years. They ignore the fact that the hotel business has gone through terrible years following the Gulf war and the recession. Other groups have gone to the wall. We survived that grim period well. Our excellent new management team has rationalised our business.

Since the bid, we have accelerated our disposals. After the sale of our roadside businesses to Whitbread we will be a pure, focused hotel company, with four main brands — Exclusive, Meridien, Posthouse and Heritage.

Our new hotel company is about delivering value to shareholders. In the last three years, and despite difficult conditions, we have managed to treble profits. Our excellent prospects give us the confidence to commit to at least 20 per

cent dividend growth in each of the next three years. From the cash generated by the sale of the roadside businesses, we intend to repurchase £800 million of our own shares from shareholders. We also intend to distribute the company's interest in The Savoy Hotel to Forte shareholders.

By comparison, our shareholders stand to suffer a substantial decrease in income if they accept Granada's bid.

The bottom line is this. Forte has built up an excellent British company over decades and we do not want to see it stripped and demolished in Granada's proposed fire sale. Our assets include not only our unique collection of hotels, but also our well-trained staff. We will continue to look after them. Forte is a builder, not a destroyer.

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Thousands march in The Hague for Fokker rescue

Mark Milner

THOUSANDS of Dutch workers took to the streets of The Hague yesterday in a desperate, eleven-hour bid to save their company, the aircraft manufacturer, Fokker.

But as the Dutch prime minister, Wim Kok, admitted ahead of last ditch talks with Daimler Benz chairman Jürgen Schrempp, Fokker's controlling shareholder through its aerospace subsidiary, the chances of survival look "extremely small".

Fokker is caught in a vice: a high cost base and the strength of the guilder against the dollar on one side and a fiercely competitive market on the other. Just how competitive a market Fokker faces was neatly illustrated earlier this week when British Airways said it wanted to buy some 60 new small and medium sized commercial jetliners.

Five companies have been asked to tender, with Fokker just one of three in the frame for the smaller aircraft, alongside British Aerospace and McDonnell Douglas.

In its search for survival, Fokker initially sought a cash injection of close on £1 billion. The question is how to appropriate the burden between Daimler Benz and the Dutch government, which retains a

sizeable stake in the company. The pair have been haggling for months.

According to Mr Kok, yesterday, Daimler Benz's aerospace subsidiary, Dasa, wants the Dutch state to contribute between 2.7 billion guilders (£1 billion) and 3 billion guilders (£1.2 billion) over a period of six years to secure Fokker's future.

This would include a fresh capital injection of 1.3 billion guilders, discharge of previous development credits of 800 million guilders and six new annual contributions of 100-150 million guilders each to support development of new aircraft.

"It is completely unthinkable that such an amount would be paid by the Dutch taxpayer," Mr Kok said.

Even allowing for the circumstances — Mr Kok was on his way for some inevitably tough talks with Mr Schrempp — that is a bleak assessment.

But even with almost 8,000 jobs on the line, the political consequences of rescuing Fokker with Dutch taxpayers' money look fraught. Though the Dutch government has not made its own counter-offer public, Dutch sources say it has only offered to waive some 300 million guilders it is owed by Fokker.

"The only crumb of comfort Mr Kok could offer was that his government might be prepared to rethink its position if

Daimler Benz were prepared to dig a little deeper into its pocket.

But Daimler Benz has political problems of its own. In an attempt to cut costs, at Dasa it has announced that thousands of German jobs will have to go. That makes it difficult to be seen to be bearing too much of the burden of safeguarding jobs in Holland.

The betting is that the fate of Fokker will be sealed at a meeting of Daimler Benz's supervisory board on Monday — though Daimler Benz said yesterday that it could not say whether or not such a meeting was to take place.

Fokker itself is not sanguine about its prospects. The chairman, Ben van Schaik, was reported by the Dutch press to have burst into tears during a meeting with the company's worker council this week. "I did everything I could," Mr Van Schaik was reported as saying. "Now I don't know what to do anymore."

Fokker shareholders are not too hopeful either. Fokker shares fell 11 per cent yesterday as hopes faded that Daimler Benz and the Dutch government would come to its rescue.

The shares fell 13 per cent to 6 guilders as more than 175,600 shares changed hands in the first minutes of trading, making it the most active stock on the Dutch bourse.



Tide turning: Spanish tourism is trying to change its Costa image and reliance on summer-only trade in the resorts

PHOTOGRAPH BY GAVIN SMITH

Beach ball may be over for Spanish tourism

The Government wants to offer more than sun, sand and sea holidays. ADELA GOOCH in Madrid reports

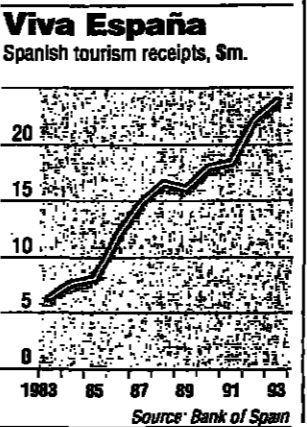
THE lure of Spain's sun, sea and beaches last year appeared to be as strong as ever with a record 44 million tourists visiting the country and contributing 3,100 billion pesetas (£18.9 billion) — 4.4 per cent of GDP — to the national exchequer.

But these apparently encouraging figures belie an identity crisis in the holiday industry which is trying to improve its image as the ultimate purveyor of a cheap package break in the sun, while finding it difficult to establish other forms of tourism.

A slump in British visitors is one of the factors causing concern. Together with Germany, they account for just under half of tourists who come to Spain. In last year's summer in the UK caused many to

warning bells rang throughout the industry. "Sun, sea and sand tourism booms when the peseta is low," explains Pablo Morata, editor of the trade journal *El Turismo*. "But when the peseta is high Spain becomes far less competitive."

Since 1993 Spain's 17 regional governments have devoted considerable resources to improving



HP sauce as easy riders vie with naked power

MARK MILNER discovers that there is more to the Brussels motor show than gleaming cars with polished tyres

THERE are not many places where you can buy both a Rolls-Royce and a toddler's Mickey bike, nor where BMW's rub bumpers with BMXs and Piaggios with Porsches.

But at the Brussels motor show, organised by Feblac (the Belgian automobile and cycle industry federation), they have been putting horse power alongside pedal power for years.

Not surprisingly it is the cars which, in space at least, dominate the show, staged at Brussels' exhibition centre, a series of buildings constructed in a style that looks to combine late art deco and industrial brutalism.

In the halls housing the cars stands the jazz band on the Subaru stand pulled in a respectable audience.

Two days ahead of the official opening the atmosphere in the motorcycle hall was rather more fraught. The noise of

hammering and sawing competed with the sound of rock music. Some of the advertising slogans were similarly subtle. Triumph's "It's great to be back" and Royal Enfield's "Made like a gun", for instance.

The prize for best of the worst, however, must go to Suzuki, with such slogans as "Get on, Take off" for its DR650 SE and "Built to win" for the GSX-R 750, while the VS600 GLF is "An easy ride". By the time the copywriters had reached the Bandit 1200 they were clearly in top gear with "Get naked".

In the bicycle hall the pace of preparation was even more frantic. "Can't talk now," said the man on the De Scheemster stand, disappearing behind a stack of cycles.

More than the manufacturers are on show. Tucked away in a corner is the computer system through which the Belgian police monitor traffic flow along the country's 2,000-plus kilometres of motorway network. "Most of the time people stuck in traffic jams

say the information is too late or not complete. We are here to explain how information is gathered," said Captain Erik van Poucke, from the Gendarmerie's central dispatch department.

Mind you, the operation has to be done on a shoestring. For Captain van Poucke's four-strong team, a police sweep means borrowing a vacuum cleaner from the French car firm on the next stand.

Ford does not have to labour under such constraints. The company has a hall to itself, running a sound and lights spectacular entitled "The national flag". It is a series of ranks of television screens feature sequences of images of dolphins, babies, humming birds, bees, sunsets and the like before culminating in an array of inflating airbags which transform into the sunburst effect of a dove in flight.

The airbags theme is clear from most of the cars Ford have on display. Most carry the legend "Standard airbag de serie." But what have we here? Nothing less than the GT90 which, according to the company, has a 1718 cc engine which can propel it from 0 to 100 kilometers in 3.2 seconds, while 0 to 160 takes three seconds longer. No mention of an airbag though.

Seedy sell-off sinks Baltic travel firm

A once-proud Russian shipping company has been dismembered — leaving a trail of unpaid bills and a dead body, and bankrupting a Stockholm cruise agency. JON HENLEY reports from Helsinki

WITHOUT any great fuss, a small Scandinavian travel company went bankrupt last week. The event merited a few paragraphs in local papers. Some 70 people, mainly Swedes and Finns, will lose their jobs.

But the collapse of Baltic Line, a thriving Stockholm-based cruise agency, is part of a far wider and altogether nastier story — of the dismemberment of a once-proud Russian shipping company, of its apparent hijacking for large and instant profit, of corruption, threats, and an unsolved murder.

The Baltic Shipping Company, founded over 150 years ago, was once one of Russia's foremost transport concerns. At the end of 1993, its last year in state ownership, it owned 180 ships and employed 17,000 people from St Petersburg, its home base, to Sydney.

Two years later, to the best of anyone's knowledge, the company owns just 20 vessels. Apart from another 20 under arrest in countries including Germany, Sweden and Holland, the rest have already been seized and sold to help pay off worldwide debts estimated at more than \$250 million. Some of its staff have not been paid since last May, and power, phone lines and heating have been cut off at its head office.

Not many people want to talk about the past two years

at Baltic Shipping. Its president, Ivan Luchinsky, was shot last October and the killers have not yet been found. Since then, there have been half-a-dozen threats to executives at associated companies.

One such company is Baltic Line, until its bankruptcy last week the western sales and marketing agent for Baltic Shipping's three passenger ferries. Although only a small cog in the Russian company's worldwide operations, Baltic Line's story provides possibly the strongest clues as to what happened.

"Everyone had a piece of the bar and restaurant takings, for example, from the barman to the captain to the president. They used the money for a nicer lifestyle — videos, nice hotel rooms, TV sets. You had to pay \$5,000 for a chief steward's job, then a bit more each month if you wanted to keep it."

Theft was rife, so the average on-board revenue from each passenger was only 60p a voyage, Mr Komar said. Baltic Line installed strict on-board controls and made "a very big effort" to change the crew culture. By the end of 1993, ship-board income was up to £22 a passenger — still 40 per cent

down on what it should have been, but Baltic Line felt things were moving in the right direction.

But then Baltic Shipping was privatised. Its main shareholders became the Russian transport ministry, which holds about 30 per cent, St Petersburg city council with 30 per cent, and a group of foreign investors with 25 per cent. Employees hold the rest.

"The change was apparent fairly quickly," said one Baltic Line executive. "Early in 1994 the new owners asked us to remove the on-board controllers, and by November they assumed full responsibility for all on-board revenues. Over \$1 million a month disappeared."

Soon Baltic Shipping began defaulting on its bills. Port au

withdrawn from service, facing imminent arrest by the Finnish seamen's union.

Examining the sales, documented in the trade press, industry sources now believe the Russian transport ministry's decision to sell Baltic Shipping to its knees was simple.

First, drain the company of cash by collecting all revenues and refusing to pay bills. Then, when arrests are unavoidable, use companies apparently linked to individual shareholders of Baltic Shipping to buy back the best vessels at a fraction of their market value.

"It's brilliant, really," said one source. "Everyone gets a slice. From the foreign shareholders who arrange the purchases to people at the transport ministry who turn a blind eye."

"Last month, one vessel valued at \$5-6 million returned to Port au. It was arrested immediately, and bought by a company belonging to a member of Baltic Shipping's management for \$800,000 in cash. The Russian transport ministry has now launched an investigation into possible malpractice at Baltic Shipping — but as a 30 per cent stakeholder its impartiality is open to some question."

Meanwhile, Toni Schönfelder and Alf-Håkan Romar are making 70 people redundant. They are understandably bitter. "We had a good company here," said Mr Schönfelder. "A healthy balance sheet and a market that was growing 15 per cent a year."

"Welcome to the new Russia."

Belgians plan mega-bank

Mark Milner

BELGIUM'S fragmented financial services industry looks set for a radical restructuring with political approval for the construction of a mega-bank and analysts' predictions of further consolidation among the ranks of the country's broking community.

With more than 100 banks and more branches per head of population than any other country in Europe, Belgium's banks have been under increasing competitive pressure in recent years. Those pressures have intensified with the arrival of some aggressive niche players.

Now the politicians, most latterly the country's deputy prime minister, Elio Di Rupo, have given the green light for the creation of a big bank from Belgium's top players. They are worried monetary union will undermine the Belgian banks' domestic supremacy. Shareholders in two of the

big three, Générale de Banque and Banque Bruxelles Lambert, have indicated support for a possible super-bank, though the third member, Kredietbank, which has strong Flemish ties, is reported to be keen to maintain its independence.

Belgium's broking community has already seen significant changes. According to Geoffrey Vermeire, a director of Smeets Verbaet, one of Belgium's leading brokers, the stock exchange had around 200 members at the start of the decade. Now there are around 80 member firms, of whom Mr Vermeire reckons about three-quarters are independents. Over the next couple of years, he forecasts, mergers will have cut that number down to between 15 and 20. Others believe the number will be even smaller.

The restructuring may be a predominantly domestic affair, with limited foreign involvement. Smeets, for example, has held talks with half a dozen smaller Belgium firms

but, according to Mr Vermeire, its \$3.5 million turnover is pretty small beer compared with the big London houses.

Not surprisingly for a country where the national debt is the equivalent of gross domestic product, Belgium has a sizeable bond market, but some 95 per cent is held by Belgium and Luxembourg insurance companies, whose conservative strategies keep turnover below a level likely to excite foreign bond dealers.

The European Union's Investment Services Directive, which in theory came into effect this month, will make it possible for foreign firms to become "remote members" of the Belgian stock market, though it is not expected to become practically possible until late spring or early summer.

Even then big foreign firms looking to execute trades on the market may prefer, for tactical reasons, to use a local broker.

Eurocats



Kipperwiddians



Update

Galeries Lafayette, the prestigious French department store, is expected to lay off 1,000 staff as a result of growing losses, worsened by last month's strikes, writes Alex Duzel Smith.

On Monday the group, which employs 15,000 staff in France, is expected to announce the closure of five of its stores outside Paris.

Last month, department stores were deprived of the traditional Christmas shopping spree because of a three-week transport strike over government changes to the welfare system. For Galeries

Update

Lafayette's Paris flagship in Boulevard Haussmann is Europe's biggest inner-city department store. The strike followed two years of decline.

In 1994, when the group closed its New York store, it registered losses of Fr500 million (£57.7 million). Last year, the figure for October was Fr282 million.

□ CREDIT Lyonnais, France's troubled state-owned bank, said it may have difficulty fulfilling some of the promises made to the European Union to win approval of its planned

Update

rescue by the French state. Jean Feyrelode, the bank's chairman, told the board of directors that certain commitments made on the bank's behalf by former Finance Minister Alain Madelin "would have a negative impact on the financial situation of Credit Lyonnais."

□ KLM Royal Dutch Airlines yesterday denied newspaper reports it was seeking an alliance with British Airways. "We are not in talks," KLM spokeswoman Marjolijn Wenting said.

Update

THE European Commission has imposed a minimum price on Czech-made pig iron sold in the European Union to protect its domestic industry from a flood of imports. In a statement in the EU's Official Journal, the commission said Czech pig iron must be sold above 149 European currency units (£123) per metric ton. The difference between the actual and minimum price will be collected in the form of an anti-dumping duty.

Update

European Business is edited by Mark Milner

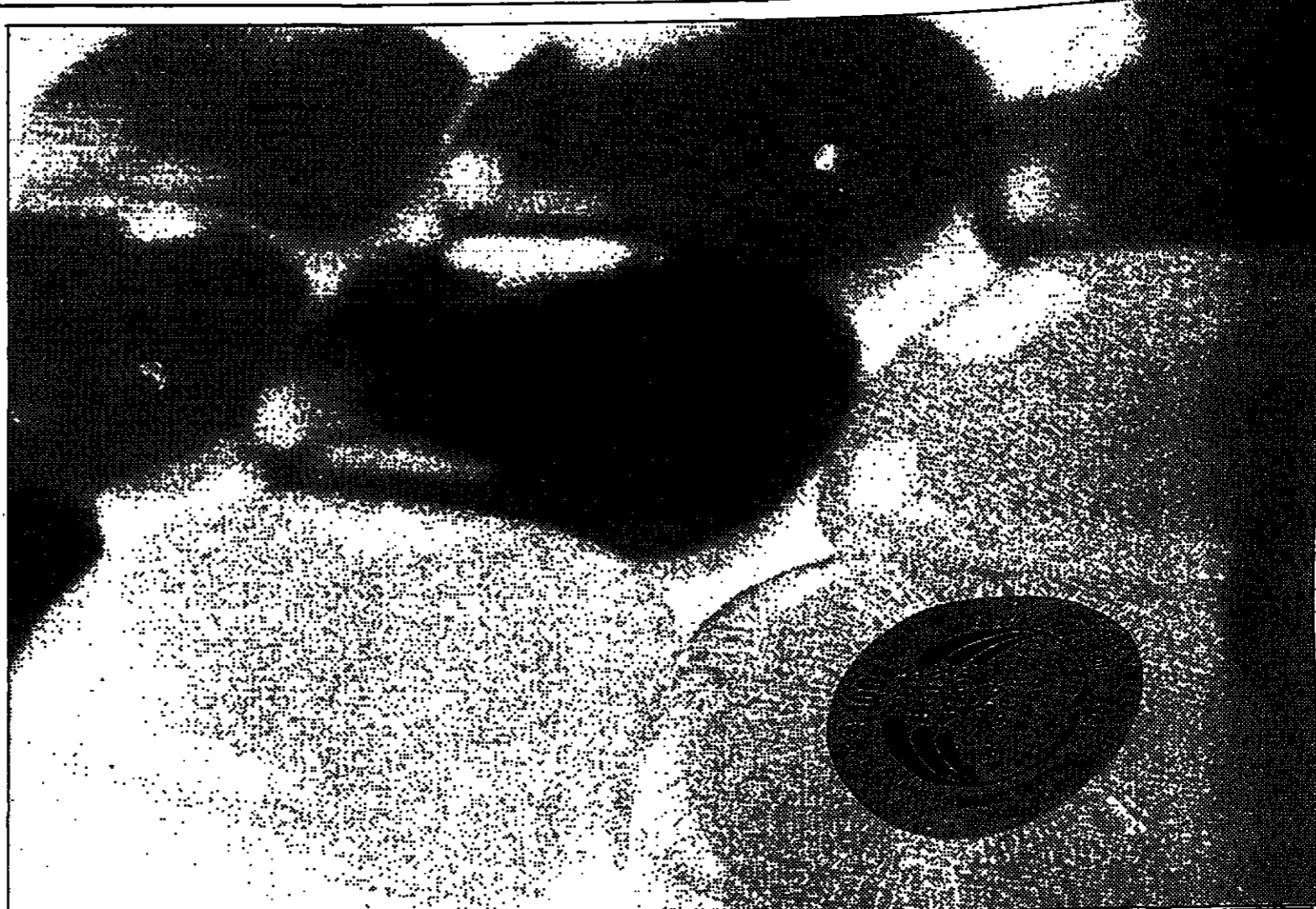
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Students refuse to pay to learn, page 21

Forte: Rocco and Gerry's last words, page 22

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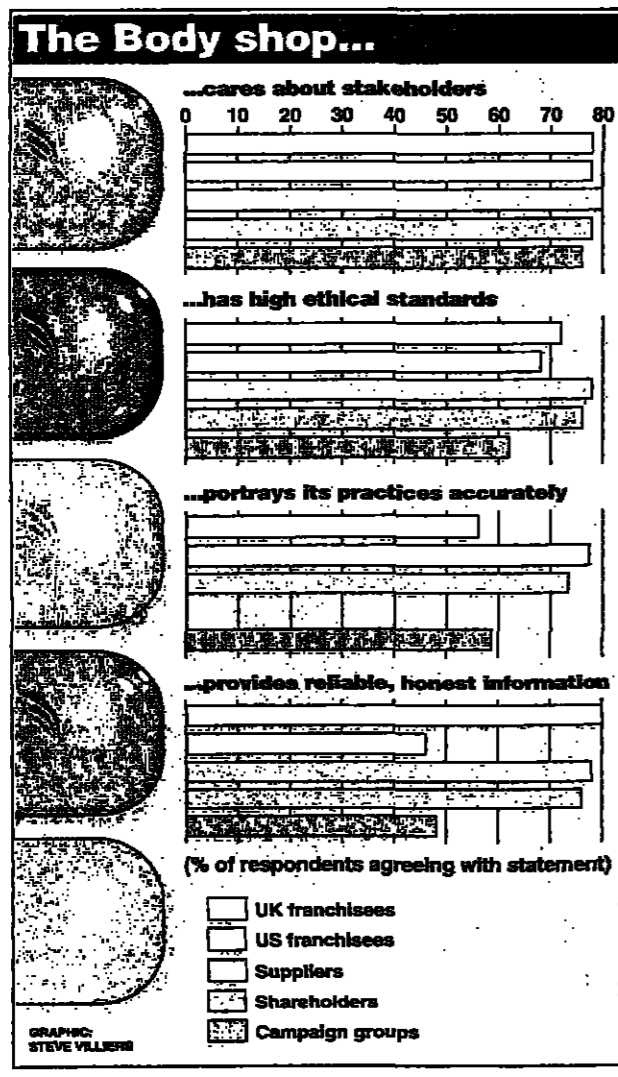
Finance Guardian

Is beauty more than skin deep?



No soft soap... There has been pressure from several different directions for companies to become more widely accountable. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILITTOE

ROGER COWE looks at Body Shop which accepted the idea of stakeholders long before its present fame and has asked them how they think the company's doing



THE Body Shop has always worn its heart on its sleeve. Now, it is attempting to prove that its values go deep, with next week's publication of a "Social Statement" which is a model for what the stakeholder society could ultimately mean for business world.

The stakeholder concept has suddenly become fashionable, and controversial, because of its promulgation by Labour leader Tony Blair. This could be the Big Idea of the next government, although it is far from clear what the idea means on the grand political level.

In business, however, the concept of multiple stakeholders is well developed, even if there is no consensus yet on the kind of relationships which companies should have with these various interest groups such as employees, customers, the communities in which they operate and society at large.

Responsibility to shareholders has always come first, but in the past few years there has been pressure from several different directions for companies to become more widely accountable.

First, many mainstream businesses have come round to the view that the single-minded concentration on "shareholder value", which was fashionable in the 1980s, is not the best way to build their companies. Influenced by the success of Japanese competitors, a strong body of opinion

has emerged, expressed comprehensively in the 1995 report from the Royal Society for Arts, Tomorrow's Company, arguing that companies will become more successful if they recognise the interests of employees, suppliers and customers.

Body Shop represents a different strand. In fact, it is the only representative among major public companies of the ethical business community. Founders Anita and Gordon Roddick have long made explicit certain values, especially on animal welfare and environmental issues, and made it clear that despite the company's successful flotation on the stock market in 1984, they do not regard shareholders as their sole (or even main) stakeholder group.

The Roddicks' ethics have been seriously questioned over the past couple of years, with campaigning US Journalist Jon Entine compiling a well-researched dossier containing allegations ranging from the initial Body Shop concept to the quality of the company's products.

These allegations were fiercely disputed by Body Shop but the publication of a social statement, independently verified and scrutinised, is a better answer than the initial aggressive response, even if it has gaps in coverage and there are few benchmarks to compare the results against.

Responding to the Entine allegations is not the primary purpose of the document.

A separate assessment is promised by US professor Kirk Hanson of Stanford University, who will report more broadly on the company's ethics.

Nevertheless, the social statement does address many

of the issues raised by Mr Entine. For example, it highlights customers' confusion about what is "natural"; it gauges franchisees' attitudes to the company (although omitting the crucial issue of the financial relationship); and it examines the Trade Not Aid project.

The approach was based on similar work done by the Third World trading company Trócaire, with techniques developed by New Economics Foundation (NEF). Put simply, Body Shop has asked members of each stakeholder group what they think of the company.

That vastly oversimplifies and undervalues the process, which has taken about three years to complete from its inception. But it also emphasises that the document is primarily a collection of attitude surveys rather than a social audit, as it was originally intended to be described.

TYPICALLY, focus groups were first convened for each of 10 stakeholder groups to identify the key questions about the company's performance so far as that group was concerned. A questionnaire was then constructed and the statement contains the summarised responses, together with some hard facts on issues such as absenteeism and customer complaints, and a response by Body Shop on the main issues raised. Separate documents deal with animal welfare and environmental performance.

Independence was gained by the involvement of NEF, by the independent processing of questionnaires, and by gathering together a panel of 13 experts who were able to challenge the detail or the generality of the statement.

The full social statement runs to 60 pages. It will not be distributed widely, but will be accessible on the internet (at an address based on the company's motto: www.ethic-act-change.com). But an abbreviated version has been produced as a broadsheet newsletter.

The full social statement shows substantial numbers of stakeholders at odds with the company on key issues.

The chart summarises some of these responses. It shows that while the bulk of respondents believe in Body Shop's principles, many have serious doubts about how the company attempts to put those principles into practice. Thus, very few people doubt that Body Shop cares about its stakeholders. But significant numbers doubt that the company portrays its business practices accurately.

Each group of stakeholders has delivered some such shocks to the company. Staff were, on the whole, supportive of the company's values in principle and practice, and satisfied with their jobs. But just less than half agreed that its commitment to being a caring company was evident day by day, and there was serious dissatisfaction with several aspects of training and development. More ominously, things seem to be getting worse. More staff disagreed than agreed that the company was a better place to work than it was a year ago. There was also some scepticism about the whole process: only 59 per cent agreed that senior management would take the results of the survey seriously.

Franchisees were mostly concerned about communications with Body Shop. Like other groups, they broadly be-

lieve that the company performs well against its stated mission, but with some serious gaps. Most alarmingly for the company, 47 per cent of UK franchisees do not agree that Body Shop portrays its business practices accurately.

CAMPAIGN groups (or NGOs) were the most critical set of stakeholders, although a low response rate makes it difficult to draw solid conclusions. As well as the broad issues already mentioned, many of those who did respond complained about their dealings with Body Shop. While praising the dedication and integrity of individuals, a substantial minority said Body Shop did not deliver on its promises, was unreliable and its intentions were not clear.

One controversial issue which was not susceptible to the survey approach was Body Shop's Trade Not Aid campaign, and particularly its relationships with Third World groups which its trade links are intended to help. These trade partners were addressed differently. Five of the 12 groups were chosen for "direct dialogue" — they were visited by NEF or evaluators from the specialist panel, and the Social Statement reports their views.

Most were pleased with their Body Shop deals, but there were concerns that the company would not provide reliable supply contracts, and about the danger of becoming dependent on the company rather than establishing economic independence.

This section of the Social Statement does settle one issue, however: the importance of the Trade Not Aid project in Body Shop's business.

In the 1994-95 year, the company paid £183,521 to its fair trade partners. That was 2.1 per cent of its total raw material purchases.

Findings such as these may only fuel the debate about Body Shop's ethical performance, rather than settling it. That will be no bad thing, as David Wheeler, head of the company's ethical audit department, acknowledged: "We want people to be critical — it's not about Body Shop proving that it is perfect. It is a basis for dialogue, creating a platform for informed discussion. We want to allow stakeholders to speak their minds. There are a lot of areas where we need to improve."

Whatever you think of the results, or of the gaps in coverage, it has certainly been a brave exercise. But will other companies follow suit, if all they can expect is a lot of expense, management time and criticism?

SIMON Zadek of NEF believes so. He says several major companies are interested in the process, not because of their social values but because they believe it could help their business.

Anita Roddick says compiling the Social Statement is already helping Body Shop. "We are delighted to see that different parts of the business recognise the improvement points necessary to maintain the support of their stakeholders," she writes in the introduction, where she also expresses both the pain from, and the hopes for, the whole process.

"We hope that, in publishing this social statement, we have planted a flag. It is a flag that carries a few battle scars, but it is emphatically not a flag of surrender or apology."

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Stuffing the Germans

David Gow

CULINARY Travels Through Germany should be the ultimate slim volume, a 75 page (39p) rival to Penguin's 80p series, perhaps. German cuisine, whether high or new, is, after all, an oxymoron, epitomised by a vinaigrette containing a quarter of a litre of oil and yoghurt poured over limp lettuce.

Or, as we now know from one of the co-authors of this newly-launched book, Hannelore Kohl, wife of Helmut, an endless variety of wurst — of which the average German consumes 25 kilos a year. And, *mein Gott*, 93 per cent of the Chancellor's fellow-citizens, or 74 million from Dresden to Düsseldorf, eat it for their supper every evening. Washed down with several litres of (excellent) Pils.

We are what we eat, of course. It is a truism that

Helmut Kohl, all 125 kilos of him, embodies in his very person the homely, self-assured security desperately sought by Germans in an angst-ridden world. He lards, Falstaff-like, the earth or, at least, Europe in his huge presence. That's why he's a four-term Chancellor.

But German rooking also mirrors its economy. Pork roll in milk, carp in black beer, beer dumplings with duck breast stuffing and plum sauce, above all the *Sauwagen* (Rhenish haggis) dished up by the Kohls to visiting dignitaries to their humble bungalow in Oggersheim, these all typify the state of the economy.

Too fat, too heavy, too dear, as *Die Zeit*, the liberal Hamburg weekly, put it in early 1993. Those piles of soggy potatoes drowning in copious gravy, those stodgy dumplings in runny stew, can be seen as the fitting nourishment of an over-fed, over-indulged workforce in an over-regulated, over-priced industry.

Kohl, launching the book this week, hoped it would provide proof that Germans are more than just "serious, hard-working, reliable and punctual". How about humourless, outmoded, sluggish? Lacking in flair and imagination?

The Chancellor, ironi-

Quick Crossword No. 8027

Solution No. 8026

Across

- Aid to problem solving (9,4)
- Passage (7)
- Hole in the head (6)
- Remind sharply? (4)
- Manner of speaking (8)
- Amateur (6)
- Gallery or slatted door (6)
- Topped (6)
- Rum and water (4)
- They cause the next month to flower (5,7)
- I am yours (6,7)

Down

- Domestic animal (3)
- Rhetoric (7)
- Type of window or thick ribbon (4)
- Expense (6)
- Prohibit (6)
- Fabric from flax (5)
- Seasonal chocolate (6,3)
- Florida resort (4,5)
- Line of latitude (8)
- Plant often lemon-scented (7)
- Count of population (6)
- Seraglio (5)
- Having little money (4)
- Take a paw (3)

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